believed to remain in a woman and, if she has neglected the 754 taboos, this blood 'rots' the child later conceived (cf. Document, 841 p. 219). This connection is insisted upon, though witchcraft inherited from the father is spoken of as being carried directly in his blood, which is thought to be transferred to his wife during intercourse.

Furthermore, a pregnant woman is believed to have some of 754 the attributes of a witch. She, like a witch, causes grain and pulse to diminish if she passes near by when it is spread out to dry, or 843 greets women who are stamping or grinding grain. If she speaks or comes too close 'the child inside catches hold of the food, and it disappears'. And if she should speak inadvertently, forgetting that she is pregnant, she must throw a stone or a piece of stick into the grain, or take a little of the flour in her hand, otherwise the women will say: 'She is proud, that girl, she is a witch, why is she talking?' and it is thought that she will have a miscarriage. A pregnant woman, like a witch, and one who has been using medicine, is spoken of as 'heavy' (*nsito*) in contrast with one who is 'empty' (*bwasi*), having nothing in the belly, and Mwaikambo explained that, 'When they speak of a pregnant woman being "heavy", they think that perhaps the foetus is witchcraft.' The foetus and the python of witchcraft are felt to be somewhat alike; but in most situations they are clearly distinguished, and indeed it is held that a woman may have both. If the afterbirth is delayed it is said that the woman is herself a witch, and her python is closing up the vaginal passage, so that the afterbirth cannot come away. A pregnant woman is not spoken of as a witch unless she harms someone by neglecting the taboos connected with her state, and her husband, who must keep the same taboos, may also be called a witch if he breaks them.

Sickness and death among men and cattle, and a diminution in 754 the milk yield of cows, are held to be common results of witchcraft, and any 'unnatural' event, such as a case of bestiality, or of sodomy between a grown man and a boy (not between two youths), or of intercourse between a young man and an old woman, or of unusual behaviour among animals or birds, is taken as evidence that witches are at work. It is the 'unnatural' element that is emphasized (cf. Document, p. 223). An owl hooting on [787] one's roof, and someone staring at one, are also taken as indications of witchcraft.

iii. '*The defenders*' *and* '*the breath of men*'

Proof of the activity and identity of witches is sought first in
● 787 the dreams of victims and of 'the defenders' (*abamanga*) of his
754 village who are believed to have power to see and to fight witches
in dreams. As we have seen, the witches are believed to leave their
791 bodies sleeping and to fly through the air to the house of the man
against whom they have a grudge, and there to enter his body while he sleeps, and either 'throttle' (*ukupita*), 'trample' (*ukukwanga*), or 'eat' (*ukulya*) his inside. In the morning, or during the night, the victim wakes up more or less conscious of what has happened to him. If they come often, many nights running, he falls sick and may die, unless he takes steps to defend himself. 'The defenders' (*abamanga*) are believed to be able to see and recognize the identity of the witches and to counter them in two ways. First by turning them back at night, saying: 'Where are you going to throttle your fellow? Go back!' and then driving them off with spears or striking a witch's python, so that the witch dies; and secondly, by reporting to neighbours and to the political authorities the names of the people they have seen engaged in witchcraft. An ordinary person can never recognize the witch who attacks him, even though he may be conscious that he is being throttled. And all these things happen in dreams: 'The witches go out in dreams to throttle people.' 'It is in dreams that "the defenders" recognize them.' Certain dreams, interpreted by a traditional symbolism, are taken as signs of being bewitched: 'If I dream that someone comes to fight me, perhaps he beats me with a stick, perhaps he overwhelms me and crushes me down to earth, perhaps he hits me with his fist; then I wake up and tell people: "Last night they came to throttle me."' 'If I recognise people who come to fight me in my dreams that means I have myself the power of defence; if I do not recognise them then I have not.' 'If I dream that I am flying alone through the air high up at night, that means they have come to throttle me.' 'If I wake up suddenly at night in fear and sweating, even though I do not recollect the dream, I know they have come to throttle me.' 'Dreams of being chased, of being beaten, of the house burning, of one coming to the door and weeping for me as if I were dead, these are all signs of witchcraft.' Close friends tell one another

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their dreams—provided they have not dreamed of attacking one 787
another—and when more than one of them has dreamed of X as 754
an aggressor, then the presumption is very strong that X is a
witch. Dreams to the Nyakyusa are the stuff of religious reality, 791
and the very close association between witchcraft and dreams is apparent in the language—*injosi* meaning a dream, and *ubulosi* (the same root in the abstract noun class) meaning witchcraft. It is perhaps also significant, that *ukugoga* means to dream, and *ukugogwa* (in the passive form) means to be killed. Restless nights are taken as proof that either the witches or ancestors are troubling a man: 'We do not sleep' (*tukigona*) is the formal phrase in which village headmen or priests notify the chief that something is amiss in the country, and a ritual is required; and an ordinary person using the same phrase implies that he is harried either by the ancestors or by witches. 'You *may* sleep or you may not' (*uligona*) is the commonest form in which a threat of witchcraft is made.

The vision and power of 'the defenders' (*abamanga*) comes from the same source as the power of the witches,[1] from pythons in the belly, the essential difference between the witches and 'the defenders' being that the latter use their power in accordance with law and morality, while the witches act for selfish ends, and their activities are illegal. This close association of 'the defenders' with the power of witchcraft is apparent in language, *ukumanga* being sometimes used almost synonomously with *ukuloga* for 'to bewitch', while *abamanga* means 'the defenders'.[2] There are, moreover, certain differences between the pythons of witches, and those of 'defenders'. In the first place, the condition of 'the

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[1] For similar concepts among the Thonga and Azande cf. H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. II, p. 516; E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*, pp. 224 ff.

[2] cf. the Bantu usages discussed by R. J. B. Moore in *Africa*, Vol. XIII, 1940, pp. 211 ff. and *Bantu Studies*, Vol. 15, 1941, pp. 37 ff.; the note on the use of this root in a number of languages in *Africa*, Vol. XVI, 1946, pp. 119–20; and C. M. N. White in *Africa*, Vol. XVIII, 1948, pp. 83–100.

I translate *-manga* in Nyakyusa as 'mystical power', *uku-manga* 'to exercise mystical power' (for good and evil), and *aba-manga* as 'those possessing mystical power', with the further implication that they use this power for defence. Writing in *Africa*, Vol. IX, 1936, pp. 85, and Vol. X, 1937, pp. 263 ff., we translated *aba-manga* as 'defender witches' and *aba-lozi* as 'aggressor witches'. On further reflection, however, I have preferred to confine 'witch' and 'witchcraft' to those acting in a manner disapproved by their society, since this is common usage, and for want of a better term I call *aba-manga* 'the defenders'.

754 defenders' is not visible at an autopsy. Secondly, it is maintained
● 787 that while a witch has several pythons, a defender has only one,
and whereas witchcraft is always inherited or acquired in early
791 childhood, a python of defence may be acquired later, through drinking medicine. Old Mwandesi, recognized by the Nyakyusa themselves as an authority on law and history, explained it to us thus: 'Some are born with pythons; they are those with many pythons, perhaps three. Some get them from medicine made of leaves which is given them to drink at the "coming out", they have only one, it is they who watch over the cattle, they are the village headmen (*amafumu*). He who has many pythons, who is born with them, having inherited them, suns them secretly at his home. He takes them out and suns them, then swallows them again, they are his intestines. Such a man is a great witch; he is the kind who is convicted of witchcraft. But the village headman who has got his python through medicine has only one, he does not sun it, he is not convicted of witchcraft, he only detects the witches in dreams. When he begets a child the latter will have one python only. If his son or daughter goes about throttling people, then his father says: "Where did you get many pythons? See! I have only one. It is you woman! (accusing his wife)." So they submit themselves to the poison ordeal. The man vomits and the ordeal catches the woman.' Mwandesi contradicted himself in this statement, first suggesting that the power of defence was only acquired through drinking medicines, and then that the child of a village headman inherited one python from his father. Most Nyakyusa maintain that the power of defence can be acquired in either fashion. The medicines drunk at the 'coming out' develop it even in an 'empty' man, but many men, including assistant headmen and ordinary citizens who are not specially treated at the 'coming out', are believed to have it. It is asserted that no women have it, though many of them are spoken of as witches, and in particular instances informants implied that some women 'saw' the witches (cf. Document, pp. 252-3).

Mbukile confirmed Mwandesi's main point, saying: 'Some of us are empty, pure (*bwela*), we have no pythons, not one; some are '*defenders*' and pure, they are those who watch over the country; such a man has only one python to watch over his country. The ruler of the country, the chief, also has one python; for both village headman and chief watch over the country. Some are

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witches, they have two or three pythons, it is they who are caught 754
by the poison ordeal.'. 'Watching over the country' implies 787
detecting the witches and turning them back, and also reporting 791
them the next morning to the authorities. Particularly 'the defenders' watch over the cows, and they are said actually to increase the milk yield by sucking the milk from the teats and spitting it out again. Mbukile explained this also: ' "The defender" watches over the cows. He takes milk in his mouth and squirts it on the ground; he does not swallow it in his dream. The next day the milk will be plentiful.' A village headman we knew enlarged further on the point: 'If a man is the son of a true village headman and goes to drink the milk of cows, he drinks from the teats, but his python vomits the milk and the next day the owner of the cow will find much milk and say: "He who came last night was the child of a village headman (*alifuwa*). He was good, he was not a witch, no, but a benefactor."[1] So they say. But if a real witch goes to bewitch the cows then the milk dries up altogether for a time. The owners of the cows will milk none for many days. He is a witch indeed.' Similarly, it is held that if witches can be compelled to vomit the human flesh they have eaten, 'to put back the meat', the patient will recover.

'Emptiness' and 'innocence' are associated in several contexts; 788
and vomiting, spitting, and confession (*ukusosya*) are all taken as expressions of good will and repentance. *Ukuswa*, for example, means both 'to spit' and 'to forgive', the symbolism being interpreted in this way: 'If a father is angry with his son or daughter he may say some day, "I *forgive* you now" and spit on the ground: all the anger that is in him comes out like spit.' Blowing water from the mouth is an essential element in prayers to the ancestors, and the close association between them is apparent in the language: *ukuputa* meaning to 'blow out water' and *ukwiputa* (the reflexive form) meaning 'to pray',[2] with the implication of confessing whatever anger or grudge a man may have in his heart. Kasitile, the rainmaker, explained: 'This prayer with water is to confess *everything*. If I do not pray with water then something is left within.'

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[1] For a similar concept among the Thonga cf. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. II, p. 372.

[2] The Zande symbolism is very similar cf. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, 'Zande Theology' in *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. XIX (1936), pp. 11-12.

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e. Procedure in witchcraft cases

Whenever someone is very ill there is anxious speculation 754 among relatives and neighbours as to the cause of the illness. If 627 witchcraft is suspected—and witchcraft is thought to be by far the commonest cause of sickness and death—people begin to whisper (*ukuhoha*) that so and so is responsible. Even if the trouble is only a sudden fall in the milk supply there are whispers about witchcraft and the identity of the witch. Then the neighbours meet and complain (*ukuvijaja*), or else the leader of the village-section, or even the headman of the village, takes the initiative and, summoning his people, admonishes them. The object of such complaint and exhortation is to warn off the witch. 'People speak very angrily, then the witches are ashamed within themselves, and stop their witchcraft, because they die of shame.' If the warning is effective—that is if the patient or the cows recover—the case will be dropped; but if the trouble continues then the village proceeds to the *discovery* of the witch. Mwaisumo explained: 'If sickness occurs, the village headman will call his people round him and say: "This village is not right, disease is killing the people, there must be someone who is bewitching them. We warn him to stop!" Then, if he does not stop he will call the people round him again and say: "Well, we must drive him away." Then they discuss their dreams with the headman; [787] it is always by their dreams that they find out the witch, no other way.' A case was quoted in which the milk yield of a village had diminished and the villagers had 'called one another' to come together to complain. While they were complaining a 'defender' called out: 'I have seen the one who is throttling the cows; come together again to-morrow, and no one must stay behind.' When they met the next day one man called the name of each villager in turn, and 'the defender' responded to each with 'Yes', until 'Mwasalutaba' was called. Then he was silent. The name was called three times, and at the third time the whole company groaned. Mwasalutaba got up and, denying the accusation, appealed to the ordeal. He was found guilty by it and was driven from the village (cf. Document, pp. 241–3).

Mwakwelebeja, himself a commoner credited with the power 741 of discovering witches in dreams, made a revealing comment on 754

nugget of gold. This 'witch' was actually expelled from the camp 754
by his fellows, but Nyakyusa, commenting on the case, remarked 783
that had it occurred in one of the home villages, he would only have been fined.

Sometimes a case begins with the startling shout of 'a defender' 754
in the night, who claims to have seen in his dreams that a witch 787
is attacking either himself or a fellow villager. 'A man who dreams of fighting, or being beaten, will sometimes wake up in the middle of the night and go out of his house and shout: "You, so and so, why do you come and fight with me?" But often he will not mention the name then, but waits till the morning when his friends will come and ask him: "Why were you shouting last night?" Then he tells them the name of the man he dreamed of, and if another man dreams of him in the same way the next night or later, then they say he is a witch.' Such a case was described by Mwaikambo: 'A certain man, Kolelo, dreamed of his fellow, and in the morning he called out on the road, "I dreamed of so and so, we fought with him in the night, he was throttling me." So his fellows came to his help and said to the accused man: "You, Moses, we have caught you, move elsewhere!" So Moses (who was a pagan, despite his name) moved to another village in the same chiefdom, that of Koroso.'

Occasionally a witch reveals himself by threatening a neigh- 754
bour with whom he has quarrelled, using the stereotyped phrases: 'You may sleep or you may not' (*Uligona*), or 'What are you?' (*Ulipwale*), or 'Something may happen!' Here is an actual case as reported to us: 'Mwantile once ordered a boy, the son of a village neighbour, to go on a message for him, but the boy refused, though it is customary for men to send their neighbours' sons on messages. Then Mwantile got angry with him and snatched his cloth away, saying in anger: "You, boy, something may happen!" implying that the boy would fall ill. The boy fell ill that very evening, and died shortly afterwards. Mwantile hurried to return the cloth, but the boy's people drove him away with it saying: "What sort of sorrow have you? Are you pretending, so that we shall not suspect you?" For they said it was he who had "eaten" the boy.'

The cases quoted so far all involve a direct accusation of 754
witchcraft against the suspect, but sometimes he is compelled to 627
move without ever being accused face to face. Mwaisumo en-

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barricaded his doorway with thorns. On his return he found 627
them, and he moved to Mwaihoja's country (the adjoining 754
chiefdom).'

Often an accusation of witchcraft is made without resort to 787
divination at all: the behaviour of the accused (as in the cases 754
quoted on pp. 110-13) or the word of 'the defender', is taken 627
as evidence. But if there is doubt as to the identity of the witch, 695
the patient or his family may consult a diviner (undagusi),[1] putting before him the names of persons they suspect. Whatever the grounds of accusation, however, it was normally confirmed by the *umwafi* ordeal, if the accused did not admit guilt. The chief might order a suspect to go to the ordeal, or a man or woman accused by his neighbours would appeal to the ordeal, when denying the charge. In such a case the accuser and accused first went to the chief to report and get official witnesses, then, accompanied by these witnesses and other friends, they went to a doctor who had a store of a certain medicine, *umwafi*, and there, at his homestead, they drank the *umwafi* together. Those who failed to vomit were judged guilty. The procedure was described by a number of witnesses (vide Documents, pp. 241-4). The accuser and the accused, each accompanied by supporters, go to the doctor, who warns them not to drink if what they have said is false. The doctor sprinkles powder into tepid water and gives the accuser and the accused the infusion to drink. He addresses the *umwafi*, and the supporters address each their own friend. Then, when one vomits his (or her) supporters applaud trilling,[2] [illegible]
and they go home, the man who vomited paying the doctor. Mwasalemba described how after one of the two had vomited the other would sit tense and miserable, quite still. He would be left alone awhile, but later the doctor would try to make him bring up the poison: 'Should a man die?' they said. Only rarely, it seems, did anyone die of drinking *umwafi*.

If the accuser failed to vomit he was judged guilty of witchcraft himself; if neither vomited both were judged guilty; if both 754
vomited the accuser was fined, paying two or more cows to the 627
accused in compensation for slander. If he had no cows he might 695
give a girl in marriage.

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[1] For the methods of divination see Godfrey Wilson 'An African Morality', *Africa*, Vol. IX (1936), p. 86.

[2] A high-pitched ululation expressing praise and triumph.

754 627 695 Sometimes the individuals concerned did not actually take the ordeal themselves, but each was represented by one of his or her children, as when Mwaisumo's mother was accused of bewitching the village cows, and one of her younger sons drank the *umwafi* representing her (cf. Documents, p. 241). Very often the ordeal was used to discover which *group* was responsible for the trouble, whether it was the father's people or the mother's, or perhaps the village, and a child was chosen to represent each group and given the poison. Mwaisumo himself had drunk *umwafi* as a child, representing his father's people (cf. Documents, p. 244). And a sceptic explained that each family chose a member who vomited readily—his family was always represented by a certain daughter who vomited *umwafi* immediately.

The ordeal is only administered nowadays in the greatest secrecy, and probably very rarely, for informants who had no hesitation in discussing with us witchcraft accusations and trials of supposed witches, though these were well known to be illegal, denied that the ordeal was administered. The most recent example we traced occurred in 1930.

763 767 754 So far we have only dealt with cases in which witchcraft is suspected as the cause of illness among men, or of a decrease in the milk supply. The matter is more serious if someone has actually died. If there is any doubt as to the cause of death, an autopsy is performed, and a diagnosis made from the condition of the stomach and intestines. 'Wounds' or scars in the stomach are taken as evidence of attacks by witches, and a black oily substance in the bowel, or red streaked with black and white, is a mark of sorcery; if the bowel is swollen, or if the entrails burst out of the incision, it is proof that the deceased was himself a witch, and was probably killed in a quarrel with fellow witches. Death due to a relative having been buried with [illegible] (cf. Documents, p. 249), or a disease of the bowels ([illegible]) attributed to natural causes, is also thought to be apparent at an autopsy. Some maintain too, that the source of witchcraft can be discovered from the examination, wounds on the right side of the stomach indicating that the witch is a member of the father's family, or of the age-village; wounds on the left indicating that he is a member of the mother's family (cf. Documents p. 248).

At the autopsy the crowd is kept at a distance and usually only one or two senior relatives or neighbours, the headmen of the

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village, and the doctor who operates are present. Occasionally 787 their judgement is challenged. 754

"Once an old pagan woman, whose husband was reputed to have been a witch, demanded an autopsy. When they opened the stomach the entrails ([illegible]) jumped out. [When the entrails jump out this way they say "the python is fighting".] The observers looked, and said to the doctor, "All right, all right, bind him up again!" But the widow objected, saying, "No, come near all of you." She called all the people and went to the corpse, and tore open the stomach. All cried out, saying: "Alas! do not do that. It is forbidden." Then she turned to the old people and said: "Is there anything here? Nothing! He is only a witch by hearsay. You, indeed, just because the entrails jumped out you convicted him."" For detailed accounts of two of the autopsies observed see the Document on pp. 247–50.

In the past the source of witchcraft was always confirmed 787 through the ordeal; nowadays divination with the rubbing-board 754 is sometimes used instead. Mwamunda described the procedure: "The custom of drinking *umwafi* has ceased, but some, when a person has died, perhaps a child, make an autopsy. . . . Then, if they find wounds of witchcraft (*efilonda efya mangu*) the father and the mother of the child go to a doctor to divine, but they do not drink *umwafi*, they divine with the rubbing-board. Perhaps the divination indicates the mother. She then goes to her father, and he goes to divine with his wife, the grandmother of the dead child. If he (the grandfather) is then indicated he next takes his kinsmen with him, and when the divination indicates one of them the man will say: "This divination is nonsense; it always deceives." But others will think him guilty and say: "A kinsman was caught, he had eaten his grandchild." Or perhaps the divination indicates the father of the dead child. If so he divines again asking: "Is it relatives, or is it the country?" (For a man has a country, not a woman.) Then perhaps the divination will show that it is not relatives, but the "breath of God" (*Kyala*), that is to say other people, non-relatives. Or perhaps the divination indicates the father of the dead child and his relatives; and if so the father goes with his kinsmen and one of them is indicated. Then the father goes again with the man indicated by the previous divination, to confirm the verdict. Before going to court he asks himself: "How shall I bring a case which depends for evidence on divination?

787 754 Will the Europeans allow it?" And so (instead of bringing a charge of witchcraft) he sues his kinsman for a shilling. Later he sues him for a cow, and some even get a court order to collect the cow. Another man in such a position may claim a legal separation from his kinsman and their reciprocal debts in cattle are repaid.[1] It's a case indeed, that!"

Mwamunda came from Rungwe, not far from the administrative centre, Tukuyu, hence perhaps his hesitation in preferring a charge of witchcraft; in more remote parts cases concerning witchcraft are taken to the courts. Nsusa explained: "We judge cases concerning witchcraft openly, but we do not have them written in the court book. When "a defender" has seen his fellow throttling someone he tells us, and we judge that witch. It is "the defenders" who see the witches. Perhaps "the defender" comes out of his house by night and calls out: "I see so and so throttling so and so! Listen to-morrow!" Yes, that happens nowadays. When someone tells us this we agree, the witch is convicted, even though he denies it. We say: "You are a witch, a thief, even though you do not admit it, get out of the country." Formerly when the accused denied he was a witch they went to the ordeal, and the ordeal caught the witch; now, since the Europeans have forbidden the use of *umwafi*, we accept the word of "the defenders". For you know the defenders see the witches! In dreams!" "What about the man who accused the wife of Mwakabela?" we asked. "He denied it; he said: "I did not see her". So on that account we said: "Since you have slandered her you must pay thirty shillings." If he had really seen her and told us properly we should have decided against the woman and divorced her from her husband, but he denied it, saying: "I did not see her", and we all said: "The woman is not a witch, who has seen her?" And if a man is fined because he has accused his fellow of witchcraft without seeing him really, we do not write that in the book either."

754 683 Formerly, when a man was convicted of witchcraft, and did not admit it, he was compelled to move from his village, and often to leave the chiefdom altogether. Often his cattle and crops were taken by the chief, who killed one or more for 'the innocent' to eat. No compensation was paid to relatives as in an ordinary

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[1] cf. Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*.

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(b) 'The Breath of Man'—contd. MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO MYSTICAL CAUSES—contd.

No.	Category of Sufferer	Symptoms	Alleged to	Diagnosis	Ritual performed
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	Woman	Unable to walk	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	Woman	Her baby ill	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Died	[illegible]	[illegible]	
[illegible]	Woman	Her child ill	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	Died	[illegible]	[illegible]	

17. DREAMS AS EVIDENCE OF WITCHCRAFT

Mwaisumo (clerk).

154 "Suppose I dream we are fighting, and that you knock me down, o
that you come to beat me, then I will say to my friends that yo
781 bewitched me last night. Men talk with their friends and tell the
dreams. If several people dream like this of one man, they say: "Wh
should we dream of him? He must be a witch (*umulosi*)." More tha
one person must dream of the same man before they will say this. I
I dream of you, my friend, like this I will not tell you in the mornin
that I dreamed so, or else you will say to me: "Why do you accuse m
of witchcraft?" and you will take it first to the headman, and then t
the chief, and make a case. We Christians do not believe this; we sa
"It is just a dream" and we tell it to each other, but the pagans tell i
to their friends, and if two or more dream of the same man they sa
"He is a witch."

"There are a number of dreams—dreams of fighting, of bein
chased, being beaten, of the house burning, of one coming to the do
and weeping for me as if I were dead—which are signs (*ifimanyilo*) o
witchcraft. There are other signs, too. An owl (*ingwitwi*) may come a
night and cry on my roof. I go out and chase it away, watching th
direction in which it flies; it flies towards your house. Then the sam
night it comes to another man's house, and he again goes out an
chases it and watches its flight, and again it flies towards your hous
Then we shall say that you are a witch. Or if you meet a man in th
road and stare at him, and that night he falls sick, he will remembe
and say: "Why did so and so stare at me like that? He is bewitchin
me."

"A man may dream of a woman, like this, or a woman of a man—
being beaten, etc., and will say it is witchcraft (*ubulosi*). But if the
dream of each other and desire each other that is not witchcraft
(Here he laughed.) They will seek each other out. He will tell her: "
dreamed of you last night", or else, if she has any love for him, wi
say: "I dreamed of you." Yes, that is an invitation. It is queer but i
often happens that a man and a woman will dream of each other o
the same night.

"Women dream of each other, of butting forward and fighting."

[p.226]

Ali (a young man, a Christian).

"The pagans say that if I dream of flying that means that the witches came and tried to eat me. If I do not dream at all, but wake up in a sweat, then they say: "They came to bewitch you by night." They say that the sweat is the water with which the witches wash their hands before eating. Again, if I dream that someone comes and holds me down so that I cannot get up, they say: "The witches came to kill you." They say a man is a defender (*gwa manga*) if he does not merely dream, but sees in his dream who it is that came. So with dreams of fighting, if I recognize that my opponent is so and so, then they say I have mystical power (*amanga*), not otherwise. We Christians have all these dreams but say they mean nothing and do not fear them." 754
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[illegible] woman has been angry with her husband, and perhaps quarrelled with him, and has sworn at her husband by "the things" (i.e. the sex organs) of his mother, or perhaps his father, the child she bears will fall sick with [illegible]. It becomes very thin and does not grow. The disease is recognized when a child is very ill from infancy, and it is very thin but does not die. Then they say it is [illegible]. Sometimes they inquire of a diviner and the diviner reveals that it is ill of [illegible]. [illegible]

"I remember a certain woman who was married to a man, Aky[illegible]. This man had married two wives, and she of whom I speak was the third. This woman was very proud ([illegible] *[illegible]*) and was constantly quarrelling with her husband and her co-wives. When she quarrelled with her husband he got angry and beat her. Then she swore at him horribly, about "the things" of his mother or father. She said: "You! So and so of your father! So and so of your mother!" Then this woman bore a girl child and when it had grown a little it became very ill. It was very ill for a whole year. When it began to recover she quarrelled again with her husband and swore at him insultingly, and the child got ill again. So her husband (the father of the child) and she went to inquire of a diviner. The divination revealed [illegible]. It said: "Your wife has sworn at you about the things of your mother when you were quarrelling." When they got home the husband drove his wife away, saying: "Go to your father!" When she got home the woman told her father everything and he took millet and gave it to her to make beer with which to pay. So she brewed beer and brought it to her husband, saying: "I did wrong, my husband." Her husband called his fellows and they all drank the beer and expressed their anger ([illegible]) and said: "May the child recover and grow well!" [illegible]

"This happened when I was 13 or 14 years old. The girl (who was ill) is still alive; her body shows signs of not having grown properly.

"The disease comes from "the breath of men" because these insults were made publicly and others heard them. I do not think anything would happen if the insults were private, I am not sure."

A curse of neighbours for neglect of rituals.
[illegible] (young Christian man).

[illegible] "If I do not do the (death) ritual properly for my father the death of my children is due to the case against me, the disputes with relatives and the curse of people—non-relatives (*[illegible]*, *[illegible]*).

"Sometimes the villagers ([illegible]) bind a man's loins so that he cannot beget children with his wife. They are both sterile. Mw[illegible]

76.9 hair. It is the ritual we are performing, they are signs of widowhood (*fye bufwile*), of lamentation (*fye lusu*). The ashes are a sign of lamentation and the *ding'ang'afwa* creeper is a sign of lamentation. Yes, all these things are part of the ritual, we cannot leave them out, it is taboo. (If we did) those below [i.e. the shades] would be angry and say: 'They have startled me and caused me pain in the heart; they have injured the ritual by foreshadowing evil.'

76.8 At the end the heir sleeps with the women in the house—before the
76.9 beer. He performs the ritual with them, the officiants wait for them and ask them: 'How was it?' If he says 'No,' they say: 'Kyala does not
● [77] stand in the house.' They go and divine at a doctor's who says: 'So-and-so is angry.'

QUESTION: Kyala does not stand in the house (*Kyala akwima mpanyumba*)?

MWAIKAMBO: It is the shades, they say Kyala does not give support. Then again he performs the ritual (*ukupyepa*, i.e. he attempts to have coitus) and they ask him: 'How was it?' They say: 'Yes, they (the shades) have stood with us, Kyala has stood with us.' [He gave both forms as alternatives: *bakwimile* and *Kyala imile*.] Then they clap their hands and raise the shout of triumph (*ululu*).

QUESTION: Is that the cry: 'Ooo, ooo'?

[78, 79] MWAIKAMBO: No, that's the cry of the hill people. With us it's taboo. Then in the morning someone shouts: 'War has come.' They come out immediately and run away to the pasture-land.

76.6 QUESTION: Is this 'coming out' (*ukusoka*) the same as that in the coming out of childbirth (*ukusoka*) and in the twin ceremony?

MWAIKAMBO: Yes, they run because their legs were heavy (*isito*) in the house, now they have grown lighter and are strong; because in the twin ceremony the seclusion in the house lasts four months, at the coming out of childbirth two months, and that is hard, but at death it is only one, so it is light. But at death and the birth of twins it is the war (*ubwite*)
[77.7, 77] of the men. Is it not war with women? [*ubwite* is used here for a great commotion.] Then when they have come out they give one another beer to drink in the doorway. The heir takes beer in his mouth and
[75.8] spits it out and hands the vessel on to his wives and children. Each does the same. They do not swallow it. To do so causes diarrhoea. The man and his wives are learning. They have come from the bed. This giving one another to drink, when each spits and does not swallow, happens after the eating of morsels of porridge on the road.[1] It is the same in the twin ritual except that whereas it is only the principals who give one another to drink at the death ritual, in the twin ritual not only they, but all relatives, and even non-relatives do it as well!

QUESTION: How about the eating of millet porridge with powdered medicine on the road?

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[1] No other informant mentioned this in the Ngonde death ritual.

157 757 kind. We take such a one [either type] to a doctor, tying a rope round his waist on the way. For if we leave him free he goes and drowns himself in the lake. So then the doctor says 'His heart has suddenly turned over', and gives him a powdered medicine to eat from a bark-cloth. Then when he has eaten the medicine the doctor puts a finger at the back of his tongue to make him vomit, again and again. So then the filth comes out of him. Then the doctor says: 'Don't eat meat or fish until I give you other medicine here.' Then he ties some of the same medicine in two bark-cloths and ties one round his neck, one round his loins. . . .

158 424 Sometimes a man in the mad fit finds a woman, then he takes the leaves off his waist, catches hold of her and, forcing her to the ground, has intercourse with her. Then when the woman returns home she complains that a man in the mad fit has caught and raped her. Then her husband says: 'Well, it's all over now. If he'd been in normal health I'd have sued him for a cow for adultery before the chief, but seeing he is mad there's no point in my doing so, it's all over now!' . . .

157 775 Sometimes madness comes by itself, although no ritual has been omitted, sometimes because they have not performed a ritual. The symptoms of the two kinds are exactly the same, their cause is different. The one connected with ritual comes because the shades are angry: 'Why have you left that child uncovered, without putting [illegible] on its head . . .? It seems it is of no account.' And then the child goes mad.

757 753 When madness comes of itself the doctor takes the patient to a waterfall and lets the water tumble on his head; then he makes him vomit, and the vomit is carried away in the water. But that which comes from ritual they don't treat in this way; they make him vomit at home, and then perform the ritual for him.

156 677 Sometimes madness brings visions ([illegible])—the man lets everything come in his speech and says of people: 'What sort are they? They are witches!' And if there is a gathering he speaks out: 'You are a witch—you bewitch your neighbour's cows!' So then people ask what he means by letting everything come in his speech like this, and they are told he has the mad fit on him. The madness gives him power to see the witches, he sees them easily. And of old if a madman with the fit on him accused you of witchcraft you would go at once to drink the ordeal. And if the ordeal accused you so then your home was burnt over you!

756 QUESTION: Why the washing and eating porridge?

MWAISUMO: If we don't do this then the children will vomit a watery fluid.

I put a direct question to him about the meaning of porridge and he admitted with a smile, rather an embarrassed one: 'Yes, well, you have understood it; yes, it is a symbol of eating semen . . . we do it at night.'

goes on. Mwamusilu was never buried, but we say it was that sickness of the ropes of the cattle that he seized from the hill people. Perhaps the people of that country were shocked, and the sickness is due to their breath, to witchcraft. Perhaps the owners of the cattle took the ropes they had used for tying up the cattle which were stolen, to a doctor to be cooked with medicine. We have not discovered the details yet, we have not yet been to divine; the divination will tell us, however. But the medicine for cutting the ropes ([illegible]) is the same for all those illnesses from ropes, so we cook it immediately, before going to divine. We divine when we clear away the litter. The cooking of medicine at the grave now is to cut him who has died that the sickness of ropes ([illegible]) may not come on us. Yes, only the heir fears to die, but we others fear lest we fall ill, coughing. The sickness of ropes does not kill us, but makes us ill and thin. Yes, I drank and ate the medicine myself. After the divination we drink another medicine, to learn, not the details here. They leave another pot just for the medicine. [illegible]

We saw the drinking of medicine 'to cut the ropes' at Mwamusilu's funeral. He was buried at Kasitile's homestead and Kasitile was organizing the proceedings. The doctor dug a hole at the foot of the grave and put into it a length of green wood which projected a foot or so above the level of the ground. On this was balanced a pot, and a fire was lighted beneath it. In the pot she boiled certain leaves and roots. She took a large drinking calabash, put in some ash from a fire-brand, added some of the same species of leaves as had gone into the pot, and stirred up the mixture with water. This mixture was drunk by the relatives present and fifteen or twenty leaf cups were made to send to those who had not come. Medicated porridge was also made and some was eaten by the relatives present. [illegible]

Then the pot was taken off the fire. We were told: 'We are praying ([illegible]). We want to take the pot off the fire.' No words were said, but the medicines were taken out of the pot by the deceased's father's sister (the oldest surviving member of the lineage) to prepare more porridge for those relatives who had not attended, and the officiant poured the water into a hole which she made in the middle of the grave. She covered it again with earth.

While the officiant was preparing the medicine at the grave, Kasitile, who was helping her, said to a half-brother of the deceased:

> Pray earnestly with this medicine, be on good terms with others. [illegible]: Ah! What can we then against us?

Moreover, when M. went to consult
the cause of both deaths with a famous diviner, Sanike, he was 787 751
told that the boy's death was due to the anger of neighbours who
had not been feasted as they should have been, but E.'s death was
due to the sorcery of her first husband. M's report of the divination is worth quoting:

I have just been to Sanike in the country of [illegible], he has divined and he told me that the death of E. was due to the sorcery ([illegible]) of [illegible], her first husband. He also told me the name of the doctor from whom [illegible] got the medicine to kill her, the name is K.; he is both a doctor and a smith in the country of S. He told me that [illegible] was angry because, when he saw her recently, he paid to us a cow in damages; he said: 'I have paid the cow, I should have my wife. But they have taken her back and eaten my cow.' E. had left all her things in his house, her bark-cloths, her cloths, everything. Sanike tells me that [illegible] took all these things to K., and spoke their names, saying: 'I wish E. my wife, M., and one of M's wives [mother of the dead child] to die. If these die I shall be happy.' So the doctor prepared a medicine which he put into a calabash. He did this while saying the names, and he addressed the names to the cloths, as if one of them was E., one was me, and so on. If E. had left nothing behind he would have had to send a man up with medicine to our place.

He told me to go to [illegible], who is a great doctor. [illegible] will come to my place and cook medicine, we shall all drink it, not only the three people named but all my distant relatives will collect to drink it. N., E's second husband will come too. About the child, Sanike divines that it is [illegible], he says it is due to the wrong-doing of her father. As for my wife she was married when very young, but her husband went away and left her, she never lived with him. So when she grew up she said: 'I am tired of being alone, I am going to get married.' So she came to me. I paid five cows to [illegible] (the chief) who is the mother's brother of her father. Her own father is dead. She has a father by inheritance, but [illegible] had looked after her a great deal, so I sent the cattle to him, and he sent them on to the elder brother of her first husband. But her father's heir said: 'That finishes the cows to be paid to her husband, but I want one for myself to [illegible].' Well, at first I was involved in a lawsuit and did not bring the cow, so her father was angry, he came and took her back home; then after a time I found the cow and took it to him, and he sent her back to me, but he did not, as the custom is, cook food for my friends of the village. He should have cooked some chickens and brewed some beer, so that my friends would be happy and say "Thank you". So now my friends are angry, they say: 'Why does he not bring his daughter back properly? Perhaps he is not her father?' The breath comes from my friends, they

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(forty miles away)), then, if a child is a little ill, you pray yourself, 783
but if it is very ill you send a message to your elder.' The senior 673
faces the shades ([illegible]) and prays alone.

The wives of a lineage avoid everything connected with offerings to the shades in the same way as they avoid a father-in-law, even though their husband's father is not yet dead and they do not avoid his living grandfather: 'If a cock has grown up at my homestead my wives do not eat it. It is taboo. It is the shades'. But my wives may eat a hen. When the cock crows it rouses the house. If a wife eats it she will die soon and people will say: "She has eaten a cock."' A wife also avoids bananas from the sacred grove, and sacrificial meat and beer, and milk from a cow that has looked into a grave; she must stay silent and secluded in her hut when prayer is made in the grove, and is forbidden to sleep by the hearth at night.

Mwaisumo's account of 'prayer when a child is ill' and descrip- 783
tions of four particular rituals will make the procedure clearer. 775

MWAISUMO: Our regular custom here, when a child is ill with sores
on the mouth from inside, is to pray to the shades ([illegible]),
especially to my father, or my elder brother if I have inherited from
him. Before I pray I go to a diviner. We consult the oracle, and he tells [787]
me: 'It is [illegible], your fathers are angry because you have not performed such and such a ritual, perhaps because you have not killed cattle at the funeral of your brother, or your mother's brother, perhaps you have not performed the later death ritual for them.' So when I come home I tell my relatives and wives all the diviner has told me. Then they complain ([illegible]) saying: 'Why are they angry? Take water and complain in the evening.'

So at dusk, when the cattle come home, I take my calabash cup ([illegible]), and water, and a live coal from the fire, and put it in the calabash. I go out to the banana grove of my father where I always pray. I take a mouthful of water, I blow it out and say: 'You, Father, you so-and-so, you so-and-so, why are you angry, Father? Since you left me I have nourished the children. How have I wronged you? Even though I have wronged you, forgive me, Father, may the child recover. Stand by me.' When I have finished I enter the house, and next day I may find the child a little better.

Before I pray, if the diviner has told me that they are angry because I have refused a certain brother of something, I go to tell him and beg his pardon for neglecting him, my brother. Sometimes, if it is a serious case concerning a cow that I have not given him, I seek for a cow with which to ask his forgiveness.

●787 The diviner does not divine by himself, but he who goes to inquire of him says: 'Perhaps it is so-and-so who is angry, perhaps it is so-and-so because I did not give him such and such a thing, perhaps it is so-and-so, I have heard a rumour that he is angry.' Then if he mentions someone whom the diviner has also heard say that he is angry because his brother has not given him something, the diviner assents, saying: 'Yes, it is that.'

783 MWASHILAGE (a middle-aged pagan): When I inherited from Mwakisisile, my elder brother, I was just about puberty, and my senior brother [i.e. half-brother], Mwakasonde, took me to his place with all the wives, to bring me up. He was there in Mwangomo's country. I went to his home and two years running I hoed millet and it refused to grow. Then my sister said: 'Consult an oracle and see why it is.' So I went to the diviner who said: 'Your elder brother is angry because you left his grave, because you do not sweep his grave.' So I asked what to do and he told me to get millet and brew beer. So I brewed beer and left a little in a calabash overnight in the banana grove, and prayed with water. Also I left a cock. I killed a cock because I had no bull, and I left all the meat there also overnight. Then the next day the children, Angombwike and others [Angombwike was a son of the deceased] drank the beer and ate the cock. They ate all the cock, and took the first drink of the beer, and I finished it off. The diviner had told me to let the children begin first. Then next year the millet was very plentiful. I never did it again because I have never had trouble over food. If the crops had not grown I would have done it again.

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783 AMBILIKILE (a Christian teacher): When I was a boy my mother's brother once went to fish and caught two fish in his trap. He gave them to two of his wives, the third being absent. When she came back she was angry, saying: 'They have stinted me of food'. For a long time after that he found no fish in his traps. At last he consulted an oracle. The oracle attributed it to the third wife, because she had been angry. People said that she had been angry, and that the shades of her husband were angry too, and had stopped the fish entering the trap. So my mother's brother went to the wife and said: 'The oracle attributed it to you, were you angry?' She admitted it, saying: 'I was angry, but now I am satisfied. It's all right.' So then my mother's brother took his calabash cup and went in the evening to the banana grove and prayed with water. Next morning, before noon, when men always go to examine the fish traps, he found his traps full and overflowing with fish: they were leaping about inside. Indeed, it was very remarkable. I was there, for I grew up at my mother's brother's home.

Yes, the shades hear wives, though wives never pray to them; they listen to their anger.

The first catch after such a prayer is offered to the shades.

783 MWANDISI: The fish, when they have been cooked, remain overnight

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602 though wives are assimilated to their husbands' lineages for ritual purposes, men play no part in the rituals of their wives' lineages.

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577 The second fundamental principle expressed in the rituals of kinship is that a moral law holds within the lineage. Senior kinsmen, living and dead, have a mystical power over their juniors, but their anger is dangerous only if it is just. They cannot murder irresponsibly. Kinsmen are 'members of one another' in the sense that the life and death of one affect the others. The sins of a father are visited on his children, his juniors in the lineage (though a woman's sins affect only her own husband and children), and the very fact of kinship makes a mystical bond between agnatic kin, descendants of a common great-grandfather, and a man and his daughters or sister's children. The moral law is thought to operate also within the age-village, where the just are protected and the evil punished by 'the breath of men'; but within both lineage and village irresponsible and malicious injury by witches or sorcerers is possible.

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●787 When misfortune occurs the sufferer, and his kinsmen and neighbours, seek an explanation in conflicts and ritual omissions, and interpret the misfortune in terms of these, putting the possible alternatives before the oracle. Thus the danger of conflict with kinsmen and neighbours, and of neglect of ritual, is constantly before men's minds. In practice, there is a strong tendency to push the blame for misfortune outside the lineage of living and dead on to the neighbours.

[illegible] (b) *The celebration of rituals and maintenance of the structure*

In any society the practical, intellectual, and emotional aspects are mutually dependent; the practical organization is dependent upon, and at the same time supports, an intellectual system—certain cosmological ideas—and attitudes. It has been argued very cogently that these ideas and attitudes are maintained by their expression in myth and rite[1] but little evidence for this has been published. Can objective evidence be collected? The anthropologist cannot look into men's minds; he is not concerned with personal religion—with the varieties of religious experience. Can he observe any effect of participation in ritual upon the behaviour of groups and categories of people? It must be admitted that our evidence here is thin.

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[1] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Andaman Islanders* (1922), pp. 233 ff.; *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (1952), pp. 157 ff.

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MISFORTUNES ATTRIBUTED TO SHADES

Ref.	*Category of sufferer*	*Misfortune*	*Category of shade*	*Alleged sin*	*Investigation*	*Ritual performed*
c.	Mwa. Kasanga	(a) Crops did not grow (b) Kasanga died	'Kinsmen'	Quarrelling with kinsmen	Autopsy: the [illegible] was found to be uneven	Killed a bull for the family
e.	Children of village headman	Death of several children	Father of village headman	Village headman moved to father's homestead though told by father's neighbours he should remain in young men's village where he was headman	Autopsy	Prayer
b.	Cattle	Cattle died at father-in-law's (and would have to be replaced)	Shades were angry. His brother complained very much when he took all the cattle	Younger brother took all cattle he had from older full brother to whom they had been handed on his return from work, and gave them for his marriage	—	—
e.	Two girls	Girls died	—	A wrong (tongue) not specified	Autopsy Divination	—
b.	Younger brother	Died	Older brother	Older brother not buried where he asked to be	Divination	Buried where older brother had asked

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Ref	Category of sufferer	Misfortune	Category of Shade	Alleged sin	Investigation	Ritual performed
6	Son	Millet crop withered by sun failed	Father	Son moved from father's homestead left grave unswept	Divination	Prayer
7	Husband	No fish in traps	—	Quarrel over wife of fish	Divination	Prayed to her own grave. Wife confessed her anger
8	Cattle	Cattle fell ill	Mother	Neglected to leave flour or beer in the hut for the Shades	Divination	—
9	Married woman (wife of Mwakalinga)	Woman childless		Her newly married daughter returned from husband without bringing a hoe or anything and thereby from mother's childbirth cup	Divination	—
10	Child	Death of child	Father's sister	Father neglected death ritual of his sister	Autopsy. 'The ritual entered the stomach of the child'	Neglected death ritual performed

V. CAUSES OF MISFORTUNE

761 *(a) The death of Kasanyo*

[28] The following account of the death of Kasanyo is quoted in full because it illustrates how several possible causes of misfortune were considered. Possible causes mentioned were:

- (a) The anger of his junior kinsmen
- (b) The witchcraft of his wives
- (c) The anger of his shades
- (d) The anger of his neighbours because he had given them too small a cut of a bull killed as a sacrifice to his shades
- (e) The adultery of his son with three of his wives
- (f) The sorcery of his half-brother's son, Mwasandikuga, with whom there was a long-standing quarrel over inheritance and whom he had accused of killing his (Mwasandikuga's) full brother
- (g) The sorcery of the Chief Mwaihojo, for Kasanyo, a man of the neighbouring Chief Mwaipopo, had built and cultivated on land claimed by both Mwaihojo and Mwaipopo

Record of G. W., 9/1/38

761 Angombwike told me at midday that Kasanyo had died. He was a village headman of Mwaipopo, the fellow of Mwaisyepelela. His case (imbombo) was this:

784 The millet did not grow in his field, so he called all his children to his homestead and killed a big bull for them, saying: 'Perhaps my children are angry at home. Perhaps my wives have worked witchcraft.' But to the neighbours he gave one leg and the children at home ate the rest. He did not, however, live long. He died immediately. It is said that the meat is still there. They have not eaten it. Such is the case of his death.

Kasitile, when I called on him yesterday, was out and his wife said he had gone to see Kasanyo who was ill.

Later in the day—9.1.38. Libonyile came in and I asked about Kasanyo's death.

● [787] But he has not died, he is still just alive. We heard that the millet failed in his field and the maize and beans in all his gardens. They all failed. One of his wives went into a trance repeatedly. She said: 'Those beneath are angry. Seek a bull and kill it.' Then he sought one, but

761 now they have killed him. Perhaps he stinted his fellows in the village

578 of meat, because if a man kills his animal alone and his fellows hear

[illegible] Wilson E-3 (1934-1938) 1937 [illegible]
Nyakyusa

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that he has killed, they are astonished and say: 'He should have called us. Does he perform ritual alone?' 678

QUESTION: But why were those beneath angry in the first place? They are not angry without cause.

[illegible]: Indeed, they are never angry without cause. There is always some wrong. But we do not know what it is in this case. If you do not kill cattle for your father's burial they are always angry. But we do not know what wrong Kasanyo committed to make them angry.

Later [illegible] came in. He told me that Kasanyo is still alive, but 756
perhaps he will die this evening. We do not speak with him. He is just 762
breathing. We only ask his wives: 'Does he sleep?' The case is this: the millet failed in his field and he said: 'I shall pray to my shades and it will grow again.' Then he went to a certain man to get his big bull and gave him a cow in calf, saying: 'Take this and give me your bull,' [103]
and later they will give him a little calf worth yet. The bull was very big. He killed it. Before he did so he was already slightly ill, but when he had killed it the illness became very much worse. We say they have bewitched him because he stinted his fellows in the village. But they themselves deny it, saying: 'Do we always kill and eat ourselves alone? I, [illegible], killed my animal and ate it alone. Have I died 762
therefore?' According to the custom, if I have killed my beast as a sacrifice ([illegible]) then I give my fellows one leg.'

QUESTION: Did Kasanyo not do so?

[illegible]: No, Kasanyo did not give them any. He ate alone. Some wise men give the chief the breast because the chief is the owner of the country. Kasanyo did not give him that. Yes, if someone dies then the chief is usually given the breast. But when a beast is killed for sacrifice, no one having died, then many eat by themselves. The mourner gives to the chief.

QUESTION: Did he inquire of a diviner or not?

[illegible]: We do not know. Some inquire of a diviner. Some think 757 ●
for themselves that the fathers are choking them. Concerning his death, 758
we are only speculating, saying: 'Perhaps they have bewitched him. 761
They were angry on account of the meat.' But perhaps it is sorcery. See, he was sweating very much on his face. Let him die. We will look in his belly. Perhaps he has been speared. They have bewitched him. Perhaps it is sorcery. We only speculate.

In the morning Mwaipopo (the chief) was very, very angry. He said: 763
'Why have you gathered together, you people? Go off home. Do you want to finish off a dying man? It is taboo to gather together. First let a man die, then come to lament the death.'

QUESTION: Is it a Nyakyusa custom to be angry if people gather together at a sick man's house? Is it as if they bewitch him?

[illegible]: Yes.

763 QUESTION: Why the gathering?

MWASALILA: We were startled to hear that he had died. They raised the lament of death in the morning and his cattle went home when Kasitile and I were on the pasture land. We were startled to see Kasanya's cattle going home and said: 'He has died.' But his relatives saw that he had not died. They said it is taboo to lament when someone is still alive.

QUESTION: Why do cows come home when a man dies?

MWASALILA: It is a form of mourning. They should also weep and say farewell. He had property. For if I, Mwasalila, die, though I do not have cattle myself, yet because I am the son of Mwaipopo cattle are killed at the funeral. It is impressive. But if I were a commoner and had no cattle, then the funeral would be a flop. There would be no meat and people would say: 'He has not yet died, he has left one beast.' They want the cattle to kill. If an important commoner dies, one who has cattle, then his funeral is impressive. People dance at his homestead and say: 'Our fellow, who has died, was a strong man who danced the war-dance in the homesteads.' And if he was tough in the pasture, if he always got the better of them and no one ever got his cow, then they say: 'A tough fellow has died. May he leave a son as tough as himself. He died with his toughness.' They praise him. 784 154

712 QUESTION: Tell me about the killing of Kasanya's bull.

MWASALILA: He killed the bull without telling his neighbours, but when he poured out the beer he called Mwaisyapolela and Kapugusa and two others. There were four. He had built in Bunkali village in which there are ten homesteads, but, customarily, we do not call all the neighbours, only those who are nearest. Only if I have killed a full-grown beast do I call them all and give them a leg. Yes, it was a big bull and perhaps it is on account of that that they are angry. When they came they were startled, saying: 'They are drinking beer! And there is meat lying outside!' They entered and drank a little. Then Kasanya divided the meat for his relatives and took his own. He gave to Mwaisyapolela and his fellows three ribs. Then M. said to his three fellows: 'Let us go home. I will not take this little piece of meat.' So they all went away. The other three ate the meat, only M. did not.

QUESTION: So they were angry?

754 787 MWASALILA: Perhaps! We say sometimes: 'They were angry and ate him.' But perhaps it was sorcery, because just now three snakes entered the house of his chief wife—the imbasi snakes. One entered and they killed it. Another entered and they killed it. Then they caught the third to take to a doctor, the son of Mwakanyamale. The doctor said: 'This snake is sorcery,' and he will find a medicine to give them to drink that the illness may be slight. But he has not yet done so.

764 and sniffed at the grave. When this son-in-law arrived, the chief women mourners got up from under the tree and went with him into the hut to wail. They came out all wailing. The women under the tree were wailing all the time with a leader standing up in the middle. But the wailing was drowned by the drums of which there were three sets.

764 These young men were got up with white clay spots and some had
832 bells on their ankles and loin-cloths. They held spears, and danced and
554 leapt wildly. 'What', I asked Kasitile, 'is the meaning of the white clay?'

KASITILE: It is war paint. During war we painted ourselves with white clay formerly. Then if I saw one with white clay I did not spear him. It was my comrade. But he whom I saw without it was an enemy and I speared him. It was the sign.

726 QUESTION: But did the other side not use it?

KASITILE: We took them by surprise.

MWAKYUSA came to visit me in the evening.

764 QUESTION: And what steps are they taking about Katenya's death
791 from sorcery?

MWAKYUSA: They sought the doctor, Mwangalaanda, for the burial ceremony. He pounded a medicine and burnt it on the grave. Then they buried the dead man and danced on the grave. That means they destroyed the sorcery. The dead man should take it away with him.

QUESTION: And has the doctor given them medicines to drink?

MWAKYUSA: He has not yet done so. They will fetch him again to cook the medicine at the home.

QUESTION: What about the payment?

757 MWAKYUSA: For yesterday they did not pay anything, now, but when they have fetched him to their home, then they will pay some shillings. But if many people have died, then they fetch a famous doctor such as Mwakikonde. Then he comes with all the protective medicines (amapinga) and treats them. Then such a doctor gets a cow. The famous doctors in this country are Mwakikonde and Kapugusa and Mwakanyamale.

787 QUESTION: Will they consult an oracle?

MWAKYUSA: Why should they consult an oracle? They know what it is. It is the sorcery of their brothers!

759 QUESTION: But it might be the sorcery of another. Some say of Mwaihojo (the chief).

MWAKYUSA: They are liars. See, Katenya had just come from his brothers. He got the illness at their place. It is they. If it was from Mwaihojo and his people, they would have speared him by night. We would have found wounds and much blood, but we did not find them.

QUESTION: He came from his brothers?

MWAKYUSA: Yes, there was a ritual because their father, Mwakilinja, had died. Their senior brother inherited and he also died. Katenya

623 Mwakikonde let Mposma (Mwakasefule) take the inheritance because he is the eldest. Mwakikonde said: 'Let him be their father.' But when they gave the inheritance to Mposma, they talked to one another and said that Mwasalinjala should take one wife because he did not have any wife. He was a bachelor. So they gave him one wife, but four wives of the father were inherited by Mposma. After a little time Mwasalinjala said: 'My fellow has made a mistake with the property and he has not given me anything.' So he strove to attract the mothers. He said: 622 'Come to me and let me inherit you myself.' The mothers agreed, they 178 ran away and came to his place. Mposma was angry and went to Mwakikonde to tell him that Mwasalinjala had attracted the mothers and taken them to his house. Mwakikonde said: 'Do not make a case.' The village headmen went to Mwasalinjala to admonish him together with the mothers. Then he returned them to Mposma.

736 Later on, illness appeared. The sister of Mposma fell ill. They gave 737 her medicines to drink and she recovered. Then the brother of Mwasalinjala fell ill and the doctors said it was sorcery (*ubutege*), that is, Mwakikonde thinks it is sorcery. This is also a common rumour. But, as will be seen later, the diviner, when appealed to, said: '*Mindu*,' that is, the shades.

735 When Mwakikonde saw the sick man, he called together all of them 734 that they might grumble (*ukwijumana*) and drive away the illness, because it is said that when people pray (*ukwiputa*) the sickness from sorcery goes too. It is said if one has worked sorcery against his fellow he always hides himself, he does not appear at his friend's house, because, if he appears, if he comes and says: 'I am sorry for the illness (*ndaga ubutami*),' even without praying at all, the illness disappears. Also, if a sick man has died, he does not go or he will die soon. It is said that the dead rise. Yes, it is the same in the case of witchcraft. There also they say that if someone has 'eaten' his fellow he does not go to him, he hides himself at his own home, and if his fellow has died he does not go or he will die very quickly. The dead rise. In the prayer they especially drive away the shades, because it is said that sickness from the shades comes from us living. If, for example, I have done something bad to my fellow, and the shades are angry, but if he forgives me, they also forgive. He must express forgiveness openly in words of prayer (*amazyu gamo ga kwiputa*). If he forgives me only in his heart, the shades do not forgive. This prayer that we heard during the day had power both against sorcery and against the shades, they spoke of both. In the evening it was completed.

754 Mwakikonde called them all together and said: 'Friends, I am astonished that the illness has come again.' The people: 'Ha; this illness puzzles us very much.'

MWAKIKONDE: 'For what reason does this man fall ill in the summer, and that man fall ill in the summer, and the other fall ill?'

MPOSMA: 'I am ashamed, and also I am very angry, because people say it is I who am working sorcery against them, although when they were ill I carried them to my house.[1]' 754 [755]

Mposma turned back on the road when they sent medicine for the sick man (i.e. he did not go to the sick man).

A woman: 'Why do they work sorcery against one another when they are both kin?'

ANOTHER WOMAN: 'The wives of Mwikode say Mposma says: "Let me be alone, let me kill all of them and get everything for myself by cunning."'

MWAKAPYUNA: 'Since I carried him to my place I said the illness would not be serious. He also sent a message to your place, Mposma, saying that he was ill, and asking for some milk, but you did not send any.'

MPOSMA: 'No one told me.'

THE WOMAN: 'The widows fight with Mposma. They say: "You have eaten a medicine to work sorcery against your fellows."'

KASYAMALE: 'Also they speak of his wrongdoing, in not approaching the sick man.'

ANOTHER WOMAN: 'Yes, and also you are angry.'

MPOSMA: 'Yes, when they said the present patient was still ill, I prayed, I said aloud: "What am I doing? Get away, what am I doing?" and I sent a medicine and he recovered.'

A WOMAN: 'We consulted an oracle, it said: "It is Mwakapyuna who is angry," but I said: "What is he angry about?" The oracle said: "He is angry on account of cattle." He says: "Why does he fear me when he has taken cattle?" So we said: "Mwakapyuna is angry because he has taken cattle."' 787 ●

THE MOTHER (Mwakapyuna's sister): 'We like him (the shade), let him come.' 757

WOMAN: 'They are jealous of the sick man [i.e. a third cause suggested. The unreasonable jealousy of his neighbours]. He dies like his father. People say: "He eats meat in our houses, he borrows our cloths," and he dies of their unreasonable jealousy (*[illegible]*)!'

The women and the men said: 'Thank you, Mwakionde, because you have made us think of these things [he had taken the initiative in prayer]. You make us make friends, and make us love one another, and bless one another.'

Mwakionde spoke, saying: 'There are many, many roads on which people travel and there is one road through which illness enters.' They say that if many people are with a sick man then the illness spreads. 782

They also prayed, confessing their anger in the case of Kasyamale, [783]

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[1] 'It is the custom to carry people to the "father", the head of the family, when very sick. This is not supposed to cure them, but it is customary (*[illegible]*). That is where we all are ill, at their father's place.'

Chungu is dead. Then the chiefs and their men, 643
fully armed, gathered to the mourning. Weeping 645
there was none, for Chungu must not be wept for; 766
and women were not present, for the mourning for Chungu is war; quarrels may break out among the men, and there may be many deaths before the mourning is over. The chiefs bring corn for the feast, and gifts of ivory to be laid up in the house where Chungu goes to pray when he prays alone.

The councillors now address themselves to the task 643
of selecting a successor. There are no candidates; 847
for not only must Chungu himself be helped out of 787
the world, but all his sons, born after his accession, are put to death at birth. Daughters are allowed to live, and sons born before their father attained to the chief dignity, are not under the ban. Here again British rule steps in, but British rule has not yet been able to sweep all fear of the past out of the minds of the people. From among the *Bakerenge*, a circle of families within which the new Chungu must be found, name after name is presented to the spirits by the diviner, and when the divining rod indicates that the right name has been presented, the formula is uttered, "*Abapasi bitike,*" the underworld has spoken.

At a great feast, at which all men of royal blood 643
must be present, Mulwa, one of the councillors, by 645
hereditary right offers prayer to the spirits, as if the selection had not already been made:

"Ye chiefs, we pray you to show us our lord, who shall be our leader in all things. Let him be the man of your appointing, not of our desire; to

643 "He, he, he, we go to him who kills and saves alive."
644 On arrival, such as had the honour of a personal interview, received his blessing, "May God be gracious to you"; the visitor lying on his back and clapping hands. At parting, perhaps a month later, he was pressed to stay, but the parting benediction was given: "God be with you. May lion and leopard and hyena, snake and tree and personal enemy, be still before you. May you find your family in health." Then taking water, and squirting it from his mouth, he prayed the spirits to care for the departing guest.

643 The duties and powers of Chungu, as they were in the past, and, in diminished glory and extent, still are, may be briefly stated.

1. First and foremost, Chungu is the man who speaks with God, and offers up the prayers of the community in time of war, pestilence, drought, or famine.

•[787] 2. Dreams by the official dreamers were brought to him by the councillors, and measures taken to meet the approaching evil by offerings at the graves of his ancestors, and by personal intercession.

3. After consulting his ancestors, he decided questions of peace or war.

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645 4. Along with his councillors he heard important lawsuits, and appeals against the decisions of other chiefs.

5. He confirmed in their position subordinate chiefs when recommended by his council to do so.

6. The whole land being his, he gave possessions to

679 The complaint is not seldom made that in this respect they were better off under the Germans, for the Germans had a vigorous way with rascals, while now criminals are cared for in comfortable prisons, while honest men suffer loss for which they get no compensation. Professional thieves openly jeer at the sentences imposed: good feeding, house, fire, blankets, and back to your "work" in better and fitter condition than when you left it!

So openly, so far as their own immediate neigh- [787] bourhoods are concerned, are thieving operations carried on, that both the doctor and the diviner (the two offices are often combined in one person) are consulted; the former to find out whether the proposed plans will be successful, the latter to supply the necessary medicines. Watchers being stationed [514] to give the alarm, medicine is thrown on the roof of the house to be robbed, to make sure that the inmates shall sleep soundly; and on the door, to make it open of itself, as many seriously believe. On entering, the first man in begins by handing out all weapons, so rendering the owner defenceless should he awaken; then a brand from the fire, which is always burning in every house, is waved about to fill the place with smoke; and a third medicine is placed under the heads of the sleeping people of the house. If the thieves dig in, as they often do, the work is performed with remarkable silence. When the hole is big enough, a large banana leaf is thrust in and moved about, to test if the inmates are really sleeping. Then one man goes in feet first, for a spear-wound in the foot from a

233 a cow about to be delivered of a calf was rushed down to running water, and the calf, when delivered, immediately submerged. Then cow and owner ran for their lives, and when the scourge had passed over, the owner, if he survived, took the calf out of the water, resuscitated it, and let it go. The explanation given to me by a medical colleague of the conditions under which such a thing is possible, render it highly probable that if ever it occurred at all, it must have been very rarely, and even less in times of war than in times of peace. What is interesting, however, is the fact that the physiological possibility of it is known to the natives. I have not met anyone who has seen it done.

241 771 *Agriculture.*—St. Paul would almost certainly have told the Konde that they were "too religious"; not because he would have seen tokens of their religiousness in the streets and villages; no mere passer-by, and no indifferent foreigner, ever sees that. One must look deep, and live long among them, before that side of their life reveals itself to him with any fulness. There is hardly an act of theirs that is not accompanied by a ceremony of some kind, if that is religion, and to them it undoubtedly is. Agriculture is a highly religious occupation on that view, but hardly more so than many others. [787] 241 782 Leaving native Christians aside, the great majority of the people consult a diviner before beginning to hoe. He may say that all is well; or he may discover that some spirit stands in the way of a good crop, and must be propitiated; or that a certain piece of ground is bewitched, and no good will come of hoeing it until the spell has been removed.

protective powers of the drug are securely transferred to his own stock. 251

A man who does not hoe is held in supreme contempt, but he does not starve. His neighbours give him food, seizing the opportunity to add much sound advice. But lazy men are held in suspicion, for it is highly probable that they will become garden thieves. 571

When there is reason to anticipate a general scarcity of food, the spirits are invited to confirm or dissipate fears. The chief orders a collection of *malesi* (millet) to be made, each village headman bringing the contribution of his people in a small basket. One headman is selected whose wife makes the beer, the behaviour of which indicates the spirit's answer to the question put. The beer is poured into a large calabash, and thence into two cups, which are placed at the *masyeto* (graves of the dead chiefs). There they are left for the night, and if in the morning the beer is found to have risen in the cups, filling them to the top, the harvest will be good; otherwise it will be bad. If the signs are good, all care is cast away, beer is made in great quantities, and drinking and feasting take the place of the previous anxiety. But when the spirits foretell a bad harvest the utmost economy is practised, and the chief is bound to see that no one makes prodigal use of his resources. 261 787

224 hunter received a cow, not as compensation for the tusks, but as a reward for his skill; the chief took the tusks without question; they were his umwana (child).

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251 The flesh was roasted on the field, over a slow fire. Stakes were fixed in the ground, and a kind of trestle made, perhaps about two feet high, under which a great fire was kindled, and the flesh, cut into long strips, placed over it. In this condition it keeps good for months, but it requires prolonged cooking when it is to be eaten. This method of preserving the flesh is used to-day, when a European makes a good kill.

224 Dogs were employed for hunting pigs and smaller animals. The dog chased the game, which, after a little, turned and chased the dog, and was led to where the hunters were waiting with spears. Dogs were used also for tracking, and are said to follow all but the largest animals. There are large dogs of European breed, which chase leopards, usually in couples, but not always do both dogs return from the chase, and sometimes neither.

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●781
782 An unsuccessful hunting season was a matter for careful inquiry; for there must have been a cause, and it was the duty of the diviner to find it. Generally it was due to the never-failing trouble in the spirit-land, and when the diviner discovered the names of the individual spirits to whose meticulous ill-temper the hunting fiasco was to be attributed, arrangements were made for their propitiation. Beer was made, and each hunter took a small piece of the flesh of the animal he was specially expert in killing; and the

whole company repaired again to the hunting ground, 224
where they built a hut under a large tree. The leader 787
cooked native porridge, which was eaten along with 782
beer and honey, when the spirits had had their due. A small heap of the porridge was set down with a little honey poured over it, and a small piece of flesh was laid beside it. Each ancestor was named, as his portion was laid out, and prayer was offered:

> "Ye fathers, we have brought this beer and food for you. Why are you angry? Neither pig, nor bushbuck, nor any other animal falls into our traps. Give them to us, ye who give us all. In our gardens there is maize and millet and all things else. Why then do you hinder us now? Why are our traps empty? Be merciful to us. God be merciful to us, and go to the Basango" (a neighbouring tribe).

After this ceremony, the hunt is resumed with fresh courage and new hopes, and possibly a great success.

Lion and leopard hunting is not, of course, prohibited by the game laws, and they are hunted or trapped with frequent success. 224 A short time ago a leopard skin was brought to me, evil-smelling, and ruined by the spear-holes which marked a fierce encounter; and one of the hunters, showing me where the leopard had leaped upon him, begged for a little medicine to apply to his wounds. The idea that his adventure made him an interesting person was not in all his thoughts.

When a trap is used, it is made of very strong timber, and divided into two portions. In one the live bait is

721 Not all Konde wars arose from such trivial causes, or had results so trifling; but much of it was of this petty nature: wife stealing, cattle stealing, insults, civil war to drive out an unpopular chief, were among the causes. More important were the wars waged to acquire new territory, as in the wars of the first Chungu, and the conquests made by the Sango and Kinga chiefs some generations ago. There were, properly speaking, no religious wars, nor was there any desecration of sacred places; but there is an interesting tradition of a tribe which determined to accept Mbasi as God, contrary to the decision of the other tribes, and was severely defeated in battle; and Mbasi, about whom more will be said in another chapter, has ever since been regarded as a deceiver. If there is anything in the tradition, it indicates a certain amount of loose cohesion among the tribes.

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787 Approaching war was foretold by prophecy and by portent. The *abakunguluka* (prophets) declared that for the sins of the people war was coming; the same terror was foretokened if the horns of the new moon were not of equal length, or if the cattle bellowed at night without obvious cause. But when a chief wished to go to war he held secret council with his headmen and official advisers, the objective of the war being almost always to "eat" the cattle of another chief. Usually it was agreed literally to sleep upon it. If one of the dreamers had a war-dream, as he might very well have, he told the others, and all together went to inform the chief. In these dreams, the progress of the fight was foreseen, and the result,

including the individuals killed, was told to the chief. 721
If the dream was favourable, confirmation was sought. 787
The chief took his zebra tail of office, poured oil into it, and hung it up in the house of his chief wife. If during the night it exuded cattle dung and blood, the sign was good; if blood only, it was bad. Blood indicated the death of men, but that was of secondary importance if the dung was there which indicated spoil in cattle as the result of victory. Along with the tail was hung up the chief's spear, which now gleamed and glittered like fire in the night, while the tail moved about with a swishing sound, indicating that the spirits urged battle. All this took place in the presence of the chief and the principal medicine man only; and their report was published in the morning, when the blowing of a horn summoned all males to the meeting-place. "My children," says the chief, "we are hungry. Let us eat the cattle of so and so." But he gives the name, not of the real point of attack, but of some other chief living in another direction; for there was always the possibility of traitors in the community, who would carry warning to the enemy.

A wild scene of hurry followed. Spears were 726
collected and sharpened, defects attended to, new 789
hafts attached. The shields were examined and strengthened if necessary. If there was a blacksmith in the village he was besieged by warriors whose weapons had become rusty or useless, all eager to equip themselves for the spoil. But man and weapon are alike useless until they have been given power and

it is there that prayer for the community at large is 778
offered by the living chief. All over the land there are more or less important graves, where local chiefs pray with their people; but the most important is naturally the one at Mphande, near Karonga, where Chungu goes to pray. At the house of every head of a family there is the *ikiyinja*, the sacred banana grove, where the family ceremonies are performed. This grove is never cut down, and the wife must not eat the fruit of it, for the spirit of her father-in-law is there if he is dead; if not, of ancestral fathers-in-law. The decay of the spirit hut, a small erection covering the grave of a chief, is attended with great danger to all the people, for the dead chief will some day visit his resentment upon his unworthy successor, whose duty it is to keep the hut in order; and when the chief suffers, his land suffers with him. A sheep or goat is tied up at the place, and if it is found there in the morning, all is well, it is killed, and the hut is rebuilt. But if it has been killed by some prowling [787] ●
beast of prey, the dead chief is very angry, and the diviner must say what else must be done to appease him, before another animal is found for the sacrifice, and the hut rebuilt.

Here and there are to be found traces of non- 776
human spirits. They are not called *basyuka*, but *mapiri*, a word which in the neighbouring Henga dialect means hills, but the Konde use it in invocation when crossing water. Their dwelling is in the water; and they are pre-human, spirits that were in the world when the whole earth was covered with

761 that the sick man should die, and there is nothing more that can be done. Numerous instances have been cited to me of recovery of sick persons when all had been correctly performed ; and scepticism on the subject was received with almost incredulous amazement. And there is no reason to doubt that in many cases recovery did follow ; for the conviction in the mind of the patient that the wrath of the offended spirit had been averted, would, according to modern ideas of psychology, have a healing effect also upon his body.

753 Smallpox is the disease most dreaded by the people,
and its approach was accompanied with most elaborate
782 ceremonies. The subject is dealt with again under
" Witchcraft " and " Medicine." It might come
either through the action of the spirits or through
● [787] witchcraft. In either case its approach is foreseen by
the *abakunguluka* (prophets) in dreams, and the chief
and his subordinates go to the grave of the ancestors,
and there, by night, a black ram is killed. The lungs
and liver are roasted, and laid in little heaps on the
grave, each ancestor being named as his portion is
laid down, and prayer is offered :

> "Ye fathers, look upon us in mercy. Drive away from us this plague, lest our children die, and none be left in the land. Send it to the Basango or the Basafwa, but save us. Pray to God for us. Hear, O God, the words of those we have named. And go to the west, O God, or to the Basango."

its guardian, and very rarely even by him. It was 782
originally in the possession of Chungu, but some 778
generations ago was passed secretly by the reigning Chungu to a son who was hated by the people, and not in the least likely to succeed to royal dignity. It is at present guarded by a man called "Tom," though, fortunately perhaps, the honorific name of *Mwakabanga* is used in direct address. As no one sees it, descriptions must be received with caution, and there are many natives who disbelieve in its existence, regarding the whole story as the invention of men who wished to gain honour for themselves. It is commonly described as about the size of a man's fist, with *maso* (eyes) all over it, of the size and colour of a red bean. When the eyes open, rain is coming, when they close it is being withheld. But, as the *mulima* is kept buried in the ground, it is not quite clear how it is known whether the eyes are closed or open. So long as the stone, if it is a stone, is kept in the ground rain will fall normally, but if the guardian has a quarrel with another chief, he will dig it up, a signal to the spirits that something is wrong, which must be dealt with before they go to God to ask for the rain.

Prayer for rain is offered, either when it becomes 782
clear that "God's rain," that is to say, rain that comes [787]
without prayer, is not to fall; or when the official dreamers declare that they do not see the rain where they always see it. Numerous variations in the actual words and ceremonies are found, almost every chief having some special form of his own; but what is

CHAPTER XVII

The Foretellers

000 AMONG primitive peoples all over the world, the power of certain individuals to foretell events, to anticipate the future, is profoundly believed in. Western science has so organized life that such methods of meeting the future are needless and foolish. Smallpox is met at a distance, as are many other diseases, by quarantine regulations, by isolation, by skilful treatment when it comes. Hunger is warded off by foresight, by careful distribution, by skilful farming. The terror of heavenly bodies visiting our skies is neutralized by the calculations of astronomers published long beforehand.

791 787 The Konde have their own way of meeting these emergencies. Smallpox is warded off in dreams by the prophets. Hunger, in not a few cases, is anticipated by prophetic warning that rain will not fall at the usual time, and therefore food stocks must be carefully guarded. Eclipses, and even earthquakes, are foretold, not by the scientific methods of the West, but by the foretellers, whose information is as confidently trusted by the Konde, as are the calculations of science in more advanced lands.

•781 It cannot be asserted that Konde prophecy contains much that is dramatic. It is true that those who were doomed to die in battle were known beforehand to the chief and one or two others; but such dramatic events as the bloody spectre foretelling death at Ticonderoga, at the time an unknown place; or the visions of Highland seers in Scotland; or the no less dramatic forecasts of some Hindu priests, are not to be found here. Konde prophecy, if one may give it that name, was more of an everyday affair, not so much concerned with the fate of individuals, as with the general welfare.

791 There are two classes of foretellers. First are the persons already referred to as *abakunguluka*. Their initiation into office has already been described, and it is enough to say that the medicines taken, and the ceremonies undergone, at the time of their installation as subordinate chiefs, gives them power to see in dreams all danger to the chief or the community. The verb *kukunguluka* means to go, or fall, down; to sink deep; and the *unkunguluka* is the man who goes down, in dreams, to the underworld, to obtain there the word that he is to deliver to the chief. *Kusololoka*, with its noun *unsololi*, has the same meaning.

The primary duty of these men was to guard the person of the chief from unseen dangers. Anything that threatened was seen in dreams, and measures taken to ward it off. Witchcraft, illness, poison, danger from animals, from falling trees, were thus foreseen. But in order effectively to protect him, they must know where he is, and what he is doing at

a given time. The young chief, Reuben, the account 791
of whose installation is given in the chapter on the chieftainship, told me that on his return home his prophets would tell him that he had been talking with me, and would demand an account of all that passed between us. These men, it may be here noted, would not give me any information about themselves or their methods; that was *mwiko* (forbidden); but they had no objection at all to the chief telling me all I wished to know. Practically all that is here said about them, therefore, is derived from various chiefs, and whatever is not so derived is common knowledge, which anyone may pick up.

When the message came to a prophet, he went to 791
tell his fellow-prophets, and all together went to the 787
chief, to whom all such dreams must be related, before publication to the common people, and the steps decided upon which are to be taken to ward off whatever danger threatens. War was seen, down to its smallest details. The dreamer was actually, in dreams, present at the fight, and saw both the killed and the wounded. The names were given to the chief, who, when he marched out with his forces, left behind any of these whom he wished to save. The people very confidently affirm that just the persons named, and no others, were killed. The incredulity of the white man is regarded as an entirely uncalled for slight upon upright men discharging a duty about which, to the Konde, there is no mystery at all.

The German defeat at Karonga in September, 1914, was very clearly foretold by Njuli and Mwandisi, 791 both still living near the lake shore; but the Germans knew nothing of the prophecy. The effect of it, 781 however, was that no local carriers could be recruited, and most of the carriers employed were found among the Basango to the north. Next, it was asserted that the Germans would evacuate Neu Langenburg without fighting, which is what actually happened; and, finally, about the same time, it was declared that the "first-comers" would become lords of the country. These first-comers were Mr. Moir of Glasgow and his companions, who hunted elephant north of the Songwe River in the early eighties. Dr. Laws of Livingstonia visited the north end of the lake much earlier, but that visit did not make the same impression as the more prolonged stay of Mr. Moir and his fellow-hunters.

Smallpox is the most dreaded scourge in the 791 district. It is believed to come from the south, pass 153 through the land, and finally to disappear among the 154 Basango to the north, to whom the Konde consigned, with much gusto, all the evils that they were threatened or afflicted with. Its coming was foretold by the prophets, who declared that it was an act of God in punishment of wickedness. But smallpox was sometimes brought by the sorcerers. These enemies of society were caught in the act—in dreams—by the prophets, who also, in dreams, went out to meet and repel them. If the evil-doers were caught and beaten, their bodies next day would betray them, for the dream-fight is a stern reality, and the body bears the marks of battle. If the prophets succeeded in

driving out all the sorcerers, no one would die of 791
smallpox, but one remaining sorcerer could work 753
unlimited mischief so long as he remained undis- 754
covered.

In a community which practises "subsistence 791
agriculture," it is important to know beforehand 261
when the rains will be late, and it is the duty of the prophets to let the chief know, and through him the people, when this will happen. In such a contingency, the chief issues instructions, varying in minuteness, regulating the kinds of food which are to be used, and warning against greed. Punishment used to follow disregard of the prohibition, but the chiefs, although they still issue orders as before, do not now venture to punish offenders, or at any rate they punish none who would be likely to report them to the Administration.

Famine, however, was not always the result of 731
drought. It was often, in the past, the result of war. When a powerful enemy approached, the people left the villages and took refuge in the bush, sometimes for long periods, leaving all that they could not carry to fall into the hands of the invader. The last occasion on which such a famine was foretold was when the Angoni passed through the land seeking a habitation. The people fled before them, and a famine resulted which is still traditionally remembered. With such a powerful enemy approaching, the prophets had an easy task in foreseeing famine.

The death of chiefs is also foretold. The prophets 622
see in dreams the house of a chief being built in the 787

622 spirit-world, and they know that when it is finished the person for whom it is intended must very soon go and occupy it. This vision is not told to the chief, but to those who have the duty of choosing his successor, who quietly make their arrangements while the living chief is still among them. He himself has forewarnings also, for he sees his ancestors beckoning him, and knows that his hour is near. Common people die in the common way.

●787

781 No prophecies are more interesting than those which concern the European. They are found over a wide area in Bantuland, and among the Konde they were very detailed and definite. Many versions of these prophecies are still current, the most detailed being that ascribed to Mwakipesire of Masoko. With a great multitude of people the prophet climbed a small hill near Masoko, and there delivered his message.

> "A man will come from the lake, white in body, and he will be lord of the whole country. War he will bring to an end, the Angoni he will conquer, the Arab he will expel. He will bring us cloth, and we shall throw away our garments of leaves. Our way of worship will come to an end, for he will tell us how to go direct to God Himself; but he will not come until all who are here to-day have gone to the spirits."

Maseke of Karonga added that the white man would come in a canoe that sent out smoke, that the peace would be so great that none would carry a spear, and that the land would be filled with wonders of which no man had ever heard. 787

How far the original form of these prophecies has been modified by experience, I do not undertake to say. All who pretend to knowledge of the subject vigorously deny any modification. Whether the actual performances of the white man have satisfied the expectations aroused by the prophecies, is a question susceptible of more than one answer. The great mass of the people would certainly not rejoice at the departure of the Europeans; nevertheless there are some who would be glad to see the last of them. Long before the Great War, prophecies were freely circulating among the people, that the Germans would go away, and be succeeded by white men of another land. Just now similar prophecies are being made about the British, who are to be succeeded by another white race as yet unknown. The fact, which is well known to many people, that some "doctors" are seeking for a medicine which will cause the white man to disappear, is significant.

There is a tradition that a series of forecasts was made long ago: the Great War, the influenza which followed it, the great earthquake of 1919, and finally a great darkness which is still to come.

The progress of Christianity has not destroyed the faith, especially of the heathen, in the local prophets; and it is not improbable that Christians still retain a conviction that these men were not wholly without Divine guidance. The chief Swebe, when I asked him whether in all cases smallpox foretold had actually 791 [797]

and kill many people. The chief, Mwenemusuku, 791
protected his land in the manner described in the 789
chapter on "The Powers of Evil," and none of his people were killed, though the total killed by a lion in that year in neighbouring districts was very large. A letter in my possession puts the number at forty, while others say fifty. Where the chief protected his land in the traditional way, the people were safe; where this was not done, the toll of human lives was great.

In 1922 the same woman predicted that, for the sins of the people, a spotted hyena would kill many. Again the chief protected his land, and again no one was killed; while in a neighbouring and unprotected land, the death-roll was considerable. In the same year leopards were predicted in the Nserya district. The chief was urged to sacrifice an ox, but refused. Six people were killed, and a number of mauled men and women were treated by Dr. Brown at the Mission at Itete.

To the Konde, as I have already said, there is no 787
difficulty in connecting prediction and fulfilment. 811
The inspiration of the foretellers is not doubted; the animals came as foretold; why should reasonable men refuse to acknowledge a relation between the two events? At any rate it may be presumed that the native will go on seeing a connection, while the white man will fall back upon the ever-ready doctrine of coincidence, and refuse upon any terms to acknowledge any other relation.

There is, however, spirit possession of another kind, 755
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CHAPTER XVIII

Divination & the Lot

THE fact of death is not regarded by the 775
tribes of Central Africa as forming a barrier 787
between the living and the dead. The two
form one community, and the means of
communication between them are naturally therefore
well developed. Living and dead are mutually
dependent, and a certain amount of goodwill must
necessarily exist between them. What the dead
cannot do for themselves, the living must do for
them; and what the living must know, but do not,
the dead can tell them if properly interrogated. It is
upon this fact that divination depends, as do omens
also to some extent. The use of charms and amulets, [789]
however, depends upon the other, and perhaps closely
related fact, that Nature is not a fixed system of laws
pursuing its way regardless of human needs, but is
pliable, responsive, and will advise, protect, injure,
according to the means used by those who possess the
power.

The idea that the whole system of consultation of 787
the spirits, of the interpretation of omens, and of the 811
use of charms and amulets, is based upon conscious
deception—a few clever men in each community

•787 911 taking advantage of the credulity of the masses—can be entertained only by those who have acquired no insight into the native mind and its working. It is impossible to maintain that a system, as wide as a continent, and as persistent as the centuries, should be the outcome of an age-long conspiracy to cheat. The human mind does not work in that way. The system is involved in the world-view; it is woven into the mind-texture of the people, and the honesty of the "practitioners" is, in many cases, as indubitable as the faith of the people.

791 The prayer for rain, for instance, is offered with a simple sincerity, as honest as any petition ever offered in a Christian church. I am not asserting that the prayer brings the rain; nor yet that it does not. Nor do I suppose that the diviner is in touch with fact, when he uses what he considers to be means of getting into communication with the spirits. I am arguing only for the honesty, in a great majority of cases, of the men who do these things. They are men with a conviction.

The diviner usually hands on his knowledge and his office to one of his own family; but an outsider may learn his secrets by paying an ox or a cow. I am not aware that there is any serious attempt to guard the secrets of the profession, though the various drugs used are not made known except to those who are willing to pay the fee. The only form of initiation is [304] the incising of medicines into the arms or wrists of the initiate, and this incision may be renewed should occasion require it.

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Divining is resorted to primarily in cases of illness: to find the cause and suggest the cure. But it is used on many other occasions; indeed almost anything that one wants to know, he may bring to the diviner. One may require information about lost or stolen goods; another may want to know whether a thieving expedition will be successful; and the diviner's art is at the service of both. Success in hunting or fishing may be inquired about; news of absent friends may be had; the reason why the gardens yield a poor crop; will the inquirer get work from the European to whom he purposes applying, and will the pay be good? These and numerous other matters are brought for answer to the diviner.

In 1922 the store of an unusually intelligent native trader was burned down, and cash to the amount of £170 was stolen. The trader went to a diviner, and paid him a fee of five pounds, in return for which he was informed that after a certain time had passed his money would all be restored. About the middle of October, 1923, the whole had been paid in, but whether the date corresponded with the time given by the diviner, I do not know; and it should be added that the local magistrate at Karonga took up the case with great vigour, a fact which no doubt had its effect.

I was present in 1902 at an act of divination of which I was myself the subject. During the course of a long journey I had entered a village with only two men, all the other carriers having fallen behind. The villagers took me for an "undesirable," and refused the usual salutations; but when my men arrived,

• 181 they realized that an error had been committed. The diviner was called to find out whether I would wish to wipe out the insult, and I had the opportunity of seeing the process. The diviner, a middle-aged man, sat on the ground with a flat stone in front of him, and in his hand a short stick about six inches long, which he grasped in the middle, while the top was held by a lanky youth, evidently anyone chosen at random for the purpose. The diviner moved the stick up and down, striking it sometimes on the stone, sometimes on the ground to right or left of the stone, repeating at the same time words of which all I understood were the word for " God," and that for " white man." I smiled at the performance, and in a little the diviner declared that the spirits refused to speak, a result which, as I afterwards learned, was due to my incredulous smiles. The same afternoon he and I went out together to hunt; he with bow and arrows, I with a modern rifle; and the same ill-success attended the efforts of both.

The methods of divining are many, and only a few of them can be given here. The general outline, however, is the same, or nearly so, in all cases. Eliminating questions are asked, gradually limiting the range of possibility, until the correct answer has been found. Is the sick man going to die? If not, what is the disease due to? God? A spirit? Who? His father? Elder brother? etc. etc. What is the disease? Is it this, or that, or the other? What does the offended spirit want? a cow, sheep, goat? and is it to be killed or not? One illustration must suffice. The father of a sick child went a few months ago to a 781 diviner, who told him that the illness was due to his own folly in not sacrificing a cow at the funeral of his father, who had died recently. "Go and pray," said the diviner, "I will give you no medicine." After prayer, a cow was killed, and due observance made of the ritual demanded, after which the child recovered. If the sickness is due to the anger of a living person, who has persuaded his ancestors to avenge him for some wrong done, the diviner directs that an appropriate offering be brought to the offended man, who thereupon requests the spirits to remove their anger, and the patient recovers.

A few of the methods may now be briefly described.

I. *Ikipiki*, the stick, or cup. A hollowed-out, cup-shaped piece of wood, perhaps three inches long, is moved backwards and forwards over a piece of banana stalk, the open end of the cup downwards, and questions are asked as described. When the cup refuses to move, the right question has been asked, and the answer thereby given. In the act of divination that I saw here a few months ago, the diviner seemed honestly unable to move the cup, though in my own hand it moved easily.

II. *Isiba*. The horn of a small buck is filled with medicines, and placed with its base on the ground. When questions are asked, it begins to sway, and stands still again when the right question has been put.

III. *Isyabwe* is a recent importation from another 787 district. The diviner, having drunk a medicine called 177 *masika*, sits on the dark side of the door, having in his

•787 hand a small calabash partly filled with sand; the
177 inquirer sits on the other side of the door. The diviner shakes his calabash, saying, "Speak, Mulambya, who dwellest by the clear waters; tell me what disease this man is suffering from." He soon begins to feel a rising in the throat, which causes him to speak in a falsetto voice, "*He, tata.*" The falsetto now gives way to the natural voice, in which the questions are put, the answer, coming in falsetto, being the response of the spirit. It would be interesting to know whether the *musika* medicine has qualities which cause the throat to contract so as to produce a falsetto voice, but the point is one upon which I have no information.

IV. *Wa m'maboko*, the hands. When an inquirer
787 chooses this method, the diviner goes to the bush, whence he takes a *kilago*, a rush-like grass about eighteen inches in length. Detaching the rootlets, he chews them carefully, and spits the juice into his hands. The palms being rubbed smoothly over each other, the questions are put, and when the hands stick, the answer has been given.

V. *Kayamba*, the tortoise. The intestines of the tortoise are removed, and a cord passed through the mouth and the anus. The cord is held upright by the left hand, while the tortoise is lifted with the right as each question is put. When the right question is asked, the tortoise, instead of falling to the ground, stops half-way on the string. This form of divination is very widely known among the tribes around Lake Nyasa.

VI. *Indeko*, the pot. An axe-head is fixed upright in the ground, and a pot containing water and medicine is balanced on the edge. If the pot falls and breaks, the patient will not recover; if it keeps its balanced position, he will soon be well. The diviner Mwankosore, who showed me this method, added that in the case of an illness discovered by this method to be due to witchcraft, he gave his walking-stick to the patient, who immediately got up and walked, perfectly whole. I shall have occasion again to refer to recoveries of this nature.

When the diviner is consulted with regard to theft, a different procedure is followed.

I. *Ikifwani*, the image. This savours more of magic than of divining, but it is placed here because it is called by the latter name by those who practise it. An incident which took place in 1918 will make the method clear. In that year there was scarcity of food, and consequent theft from gardens and storehouses. One man went to the diviner, and asked him to find the goods and the thief. The diviner took a small image of a man, about two feet in height, made from a block of wood. In the head was a cavity, into which medicine was put, and the cavity closed. The party went to the garden from which the food had been stolen, and, the image being laid on the ground, the diviner prayed to it to lead them to the thief. It was then taken up in the right hand of a strong man, and presently began to shake violently, so that it could with difficulty be held. In a little it swayed in one direction, and the holder moved thither, the whole party following, until the shaking of the image ceased in a garden. Digging at that spot, the stolen food was discovered ; and the image, being asked now to find the thief, led them to a certain house, the owner of which at once confessed the theft, and paid a cow as fine. A similar incident occurred in 1919, when a number of hoes were stolen. The person accused by the image vigorously denied guilt, but gave in when threatened with the poison test, and paid a cow as fine. In this case the confession, as indeed in both cases, may have been due to fear of what would happen in the poison ordeal, and the fine paid rather than undergo further trials, even although the accused persons were not really guilty.

II. *Ulupembe*, the horn. Recently a cow was stolen, and the owner went to a diviner for help, taking with him a piece of the halter by which the cow had been tethered in the house. The diviner made a fire by rubbing two sticks together, and as the smoke ascended, he added to the smouldering fire tiny bits of the rope, along with some of his own medicines, and as the smoke increased, the diviner directed it to go towards the village where the thief lived. Noting the direction in which the smoke moved, he told the owner to wait until some one died in that village, at the same time bidding him on no account weep for the dead man, for then the medicine would kill him also. If the bladder of the first person to die showed signs of blackness, there need be no doubt that he was the thief, and his friends would be obliged to pay over a cow. For the nearest relative of the dead man would go to the diviner to find out the cause of the discoloration, and would of necessity make reparation. 787

III. A few years ago a policeman had his goods stolen at Mwaya. Instead of reporting to the proper quarters, he went to a diviner, who sprinkled the policeman's house with medicine, which he publicly declared would kill the thief, and in a short time the goods were brought to the chief of the district. The deception in this case is too obvious to call for comment.

Inquiries regarding hunting and fishing, and every other kind of question, are conducted in ways similar to those already given. Employment with a white man is evidently still a matter for careful consideration, and it is entirely possible that the diviner prevents many a man from going to work who would otherwise be glad to go. "Shall I find work?" "Shall I find peace?" "Shall I get good wages?" The second question is much the most important, and means, "Shall I be employed by a white man who is not a perpetual scold?" the kind of European whom the native hates and fears more than anything else.

The fee paid to the diviner varied from about a halfpenny to an ox or a cow. [791]

While there is undoubtedly deliberate cheating and charlatanry, these should be regarded, not as the essence of the system, but its excrescence. In many cases, if not in all, the diviner has subconsciously decided what answer shall be given; in the region of the subconscious his mind is made up, and, there being no opposing idea, the "mental process issues in

787 a conation which passes over into the physical motor response" (Tansley). The image in the mind, of the divining rod acting in the manner conceived, tends to become a physical fact, and the rod comes to a halt in obedience to a previously formed decision, of which the operator is, in most cases, not consciously aware. Nevertheless the opportunities for deception are many.

Ifipendo, the lot. The lot is resorted to in a variety of cases, but its application is much more limited than that of divination.

787 I. When divination has decided that an illness is due to poison, the lot is invoked to find the poisoner. 627 Little pieces of dough are kneaded into as many tiny cups as there are persons suspected. Into each is put a small quantity of *mwafi* (the poison used for the ordeal), and the suspected persons are then invited to take each the cup that he selects for himself, the preparations having been made, of course, in their absence. The guilty person is he who takes the cup in which the poison remains unabsorbed into the dough, the others being assumed to have vomited. This might just as well be called a way of undergoing the poison ordeal, but as it is called *ifipendo* it is included here.

II. In cases of disputed inheritance no poison is put into the cups, but a little dry flour. The claimant who selects the cup in which the moisture from the dough has penetrated to the dry flour is declared to be the rightful heir.

787 When the rain stops, and no natural cause can be assigned, it is assumed to be the act of some person

unknown. Now when a common man stops the rain, 787 he must first have obtained the assistance of his chief; and the chief, being discovered by the method just described, must take measures to have the evil undone.

III. If a question arises as to the ownership of some article, small sticks are set upright in the ground. The claimants sit each opposite his own stick, and he whose stick first falls, if it falls towards him, is the rightful owner. But if the stick falls towards another person, then that person is declared the owner. Finally, if goods of any kind are divided into lots, one lot for each of a number of persons, sticks are taken, marked to correspond with the lots. Each shareholder picks out a stick, the marks, of course, not being shown to him, and gets the goods which correspond to the marks. There is no appeal, the decision of the lot is final.

The poison ordeal, though now prohibited, and 787 administered only in secret, was, until European 627 government began to put it down, so common that a description of it comes in appropriately in any chapter dealing with native life; and as it has been referred to here already, the method of administering to individuals will be given now, leaving administration to a whole community for the chapter on "Witchcraft." The ordeal was applied for reasons grave or trivial, from an accusation of murder down to a petty family quarrel of no importance except in a moment of ill-temper. Both parties to a quarrel or an accusation went to the doctor, and stated their case. He took a piece of bark of the *mwafi* tree for each, raised it a little in

787 his hand and let it fall to the ground ; if one turned
627 round in falling and the other fell without turning, the doctor knew beforehand which was the guilty person—he whose bark turned round in falling. The poison was then prepared from the bark by the doctor, by whom it was administered next day. The one who vomited was in the right, the other in the wrong.

Assuming that the poison was honestly administered, that is to say, that the doctor did not give a strong mixture to one and a weak to another, which he very probably did in many cases, must it be assumed that the result was merely fortuitous? Is it not a psychological possibility that the consciousness of guilt in the one case, and of innocence in another, causes the poison in the stomach to act in the way that generations of belief in its efficacy has led the whole community to expect that it would act? I do not suggest that this happened in all cases. No doubt the generations have seen countless cases of tragic miscarriage of justice; on the other hand, so many confessions have followed conviction under the ordeal, that it is difficult to believe that in all cases the discovery of the guilty person was a mere fortuity.

772 of what is coming. But these signs and tokens are not the act of an impersonal universe; they are the act of God, a revelation of His care for men.

781 In Konde omens and portents the dramatic element is slight. I can retail nothing to equal in creepiness the cry of the Irish banshee, or Highland dogs barking at an invisible funeral, or the family ghost clanking its chain in an old English mansion. But a Konde dog howls at night, and sudden silence falls upon the previously laughing and chatting company sitting around the fire, or out in the cool moonlight. Who is going to die? And when? And of what sickness? Or a branch creaks in the forest as one is passing through it at night; and the belated traveller hastens his steps without looking backward, for that way lies death. The bold man who passes the grave of a chief at night, and hears his name called, takes to his heels, eyes front for his very life, for the backward look is death, though to the closed eye there is little danger that cannot be averted.

Omens are offered by nature; they come spontaneously, so far as men are concerned. There are cases in which the omens are consulted, or taken, but generally the information is given by events, rather than discovered by experiment, as with the ancient Roman augurs. And although some men know more about them than others, there are no specialists to whom a fee has to be paid for the interpretation of the omen.

The rough classification which is here attempted, makes no pretence of being exhaustive. Life is full

787 of hints and tokens of the goodwill or illwill of the unseen powers, and the wise man is he who profits by them where that is possible; where it is not possible, he is the wise man who quietly awaits the event, thankful that at least the misfortune does not take him at unawares, and that, if he cannot ward off the danger, he can meet it with an equanimity impossible to one upon whom the blow falls suddenly.

787 821 1. Weather lore is strangely absent, perhaps because in the tropics there is a regularity about the weather which renders prognostication as unnecessary as barometers. If, on a rainy evening, the crow caws on a high note, it will be hot the next day, with a cloudless sky; if on a low note the rain will continue. Another token of rain is given when the long-necked, long-legged birds, *mwankusye*, fly in a line abreast towards the lake.

787 827 2. Of bad news there are countless indications; of good news only a very few hints have come to light. Twitching of the upper eyelid indicates good fortune of some kind undefined; but if the twitching is in the lower lid, death is near, of the person whose eye twitches, or of a friend.

787 825 3. Before the settlement of the country by the Europeans, long journeys were rarely undertaken, and omens on the way were carefully watched for, and as carefully heeded when they were given. Serpents are the most trusted mediums and great significance is attached to their movements. A serpent lying on one side of the path, and slipping into the bush on that side as the travellers approach, indicates a clear

path. But if the serpent crosses to the other side and
•787 into the bush, the way is closed, and the travellers
825 will return to their homes, no matter how near their
destination they may be. What will happen if they
continue their journey is not clear; some undefined
evil will overtake them. Parties on the war-path
heeded this warning, for it was an omen of defeat if
they went on, which, naturally, they never did. If
[763] the snake escapes into a hole, it indicates a death at
the nearest village; and if a python is seen on the
road, the travellers, whose path is not closed, may
expect to find the death-wail going on at the first
village they come to.

A two-headed snake, whatever that may be, is a
[763] sure sign of death at the place one is going to; and
two snakes fighting indicate coming evil, which can
only be averted by returning to the place whence one
has set out. A tree falling across a path, is another
warning, which no man disregards; but the tree must
fall within view of the person to whom the hint is
given; trees that have fallen otherwise have no
significance. But it is worth noting that natives
travelling with white men pay no heed to any omens.
They are protected by the power of the European,
and any significance the omens may have is his
affair.

787 4. Travellers have their tokens on the way: the
people to whom they go have foretokens of their
825 approach. If the fire "speaks," if it makes a burring
noise in the flame; if the hens go about uttering low
cries; if *amayogobera*, small black birds with white

● 787 breasts, sit on a tree near the house; if *mwanjala*,
[825] little black and white birds of another species, hop
about twittering; the approach of strangers is fore-
[574] told. Hospitality to strangers is a primary virtue
among the Konde, and food is prepared at once; but
[576] it is not cooked until they actually arrive. To offer
them food already cooked, is to offer a cold welcome,
and possibly to do an injury; for cold food must not
be eaten by chiefs, nor by hunters, nor by doctors, for
in all these cases the effect would be to destroy the
power of the medicines by virtue of which they are
assured of success in their various callings.

787 5. Omens having reference to food are numerous,
and a few examples must suffice. If a fly goes into
262 one's mouth, it is a sure sign that the person will
soon be eating flesh, a rare treat for the Konde, who seldom eat flesh, unless there is an occasion for it: a birth, a marriage, or a death. But the fly indicates none of these; the flesh hinted at is a pure gift with no kind of condition attached. The same good fortune is suggested if a child eats cinders from the fire-place. A leopard crying all night in the neighbourhood is giving information that some one has broken a food prohibition. New season's food has been eaten before the chief has laid an offering of the first-fruits of that particular food-stuff at the grave of his ancestors, and the dwellers in the underworld are angry at the insult offered them. The chief is informed of the crying of the leopard, and the diviner is called in to find the culprit.

781 There is a common grass called *ditika*, which in

● 787 appearance is not unlike *malesi*, from which beer is made. If anyone eats this while there is abundance of proper food, it is an omen of famine to come. If the offender is a child, he is not beaten; but if he is grown up, he is mercilessly dealt with. It is not pretended that the beating averts the evil, nor has the man's action in eating the *ditika* anything to do with the coming famine, except to foretell it. If one asks, Why then is he beaten? the answer is simply that having foretold evil he deserves to be beaten. This unpalatableness of plain truth (if it is plain truth) is not unknown among other races than the Bantu.

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224
825
6. Elephants while being hunted impart a great deal of varied information to the hunters. As elephant hunting by natives has long been prohibited, the omens afforded are no longer available, but that does not affect the belief in them. "The elephant does not lie" is an assured conviction in the minds of the hunters, and when an omen was given, the hunt was abandoned until the matter was investigated.

If, as the hunters approach, elephants are found leaping upon each other, a halt is called; both because in that condition they are specially dangerous, and because the omen is otherwise bad. There is sin among the hunters, and the whole party returns to the *fitembe*, the temporary quarters erected for the hunting period. There the case is gone into. Some one has wronged his neighbour in the manner suggested by the action of the elephants, and nothing can be done until it is put right. To go on with the hunt would be the extremest folly, and if no one confesses, the party returns to the village, and the diviner is called to discover the culprit. 787 ● 224

If two elephants are found kneeling and facing each other, some one's wife has erred in his absence, and the hunt is stopped until justice is done. An elephant taking up dust with his trunk and offering it to another, shows that some one has offered snuff to another man's wife, a most significant action, demanding immediate satisfaction. If an elephant is seen touching the teats of another, a similar action has been committed in the village, and again the hunt stops for inquiry and punishment. Trumpeting elephants are a sign of quarrelling in the village, and one plastering its face with mud is a sign of death, for the women at the death-wail cover their faces with mud or chalk. The hunters return, and do not resume until all is clear again. It is most important that not only the hunters should be free from evil, but their friends also, for evil brings them into danger, and it is the duty of all in the village to see that the natural dangers of the hunt are not increased by unnatural evil in their homes. 825

7. War was foretold by the prophets, but confirmatory signs were usually not wanting. If the horns of the new moon were of unequal length, an enemy was known to be approaching; necessarily an enemy from a distance, for the phenomenon must have been visible over a wide area. The same terror was announced by a cow bellowing at night, if there was no known cause for its outcry. This, naturally, is a thing of the past, as war, at least native war, has 787 721

● 787 721 [825] ceased. What significance would now be attached to these omens, I do not know. The buffalo, like the elephant, does not lie, and wise men heed its warnings. Many years ago a man called Masapa went to the Kinga region, where he quarrelled with the people, and barely escaped with his life. His chief, Mwaisumo, took up the quarrel, and prepared to invade the enemy's territory, undeterred by the predictions of defeat which came in dreams to his prophets, until, on the way, one of his men was killed by a buffalo, and this was a warning not to be disregarded. On their return home, they were received by their women folks, not with contempt and mocking, but as wise men, who were too wary to tempt "Providence" by foolish action. One more war omen. If a man, on the point of leaving for the field of battle, was suddenly, but accidentally, seized by the wrist by his wife, he laid down his weapons, and quietly stayed at home; not for him the joy of battle; he would have been killed, and no one thought the worse of him for heeding the omen.

781 763 8. Foretokens of death are so numerous that it is difficult even to classify them. Whatever is rare, or unnatural, or sudden, may be taken as a warning of approaching death. A mole seen by day, is a rare event, and full of dread. A Christian living near me saw this wonder in February, 1923, and in the same month he got news of the death of a friend a hundred miles away! No connection? He thought there was. To see the *kasuchi*, a small aquatic animal, is to see something so rare that its appearance m[illegible] the

foretoken of widespread death; but no one known 787
to me has had the misfortune to see it. Foxes are 763
said to have increased so greatly since the advent of the white man, that no significance is now attached to their crying; but a generation ago it announced the approaching death of a great chief. There was an interesting recrudescence of this belief in 1914. In July of that year there was a great barking of foxes in the neighbourhood of the Overtoun Institution (outside the Konde country). The news spread far, and the general anticipation of widespread disaster was held to have been amply justified when the first intimation of the Great War was received. A dog howling at night, surely nothing uncommon, still predicts death, and the dog is beaten, not because its howling brings on the evil, or because the beating can avert it; it foretells misfortune, and the forecast is unwelcome, and the unfortunate retailer of information must suffer for lack of common sense.

A cock crowing at night, when no cock should crow, is a foretoken of death, and in the first place of its own; no second time would that cock be the harbinger of news so unwelcome. Sudden things, again, an unexpected collapse of a house which looks strong, or of a tree which shows no sign of decay; or of a grave which is being digged, or a pot of beer which falls without obvious cause; these are all of dreadful omen, indicating the death of a chief. The father of the present chief Kabeta, living near Rungwe, was a great planter of trees. As he lay dying, all the trees which he had planted in his youth

787 fell one after another, and when Kabeta went to his fathers, he had no more trees to his credit than when
763 he was born. The fall of the village tree, planted at the installation of the chief, shows that he in whose honour it was planted is about to go to the spirit-land.

9. The heavens give very few signs. If the full
787 moon is red, with a red circle around it, plague is
821 coming. If the sun "builds a house" (*nimbus*), some woman is about to give birth to twins. Worst of all, naturally, is an eclipse. "*Kyala asambwike*," they say, "God has lost patience, He is going to kill us all," and they go out with drums and wild shoutings to induce the Supreme Being to go away to the Basango.

787 What has been described in the foregoing paragraphs is called *kusura*, to foreshadow, forecast, the agent being entirely unconscious of the significance of the action. There is another class of actions which also forecast; but although the difference is not very obvious, a different word is used, *kusikura*, which sometimes means to insult, but commonly to act as a pointer to coming evil. Such actions are mostly unnatural; many of them are in themselves evil, and their occurrence is regarded as a portent.

1. Unnatural anger. Anger in a child is a phenomenon of awe. If a grown-up person arouses it—not in his own child—that person has received warning that his death is near. How this comes about is not clear. Some natives say that the anger is a sign, which cannot be explained; others that the child

has a disease, from which he does not himself suffer, 787
but which passes over to the person who arouses the wrath.

At Karonga, if two old men fight with their fists, 787
and tear each other's garments, they have forecasted 579
death for each other. The death of a friend of one or the other will shortly take place. Among the Banyakyusa to the north, the fight of any two, young or old, with fists only, is a portent of the same significance. Such anger blazes up suddenly, and the two men fly at each other in blind fury, unable to restrain themselves sufficiently to go and fetch the weapons with which reasonable men fight. The fist as a weapon of war is not highly regarded by Africans generally, however dear it may be to others.

2. Unnatural actions. To invite an old man to 787
climb a tree may seem to us more laughable than 578
deadly; but to the Konde it is a dreadful combination of insult and forecast; it is a forecast, because such a thing is an insult so great as to be in itself a portent. The number of things that come under this head is legion; but generally, to ask an old person to do what is unnatural for an old person to do, is *kusikura.* Little girls quite innocently removing their scanty covering in the presence of an old man, have unwittingly warned him that his days are near an end. Perhaps under the same category we may include an invitation given by a child to an old man to come and eat; to us it could not come in a more charming way; but the old Konde would turn his back indignantly on the ill-bred brat who

787 so insulted him. This does not apply to an invitation
578 to drink beer, but no one can explain why there is
a difference.

3. Accusations against a man of good character come under the same heading. Some evil has been done, and the wrong-doer has not been discovered. Then, perhaps in joke, or it may be out of personal dislike, some one says that so and so did it. The person referred to knows that his days will not be long in the land. "Did I ever do a thing like that?" he asks indignantly. "Why, then, am I accused?" It can only be *kusikura*, and he expects to die, at the best, within a year or two.

787 4. If the spirits, in dreams, offer food, it must not
828 be accepted, even in the dream; to accept it means
death.

Connected with the foregoing, but having a
787 different name among the Konde, are insults or
578 injuries to parents. A man who fights with his father,
593 and throws him down, has achieved the final wickedness. Whether the old man was right or wrong in the matter in dispute is of no consequence; the whole community expresses its abhorrence of the deed. "Has this man reached even to God?" that is to say, does he consider himself the equal of God, that he does such things? Word is sent to the chief, and the whole district is informed of the evil thing that has been done. There is no formal denunciation, no spoken curse; but the *ikugune*, the curse of all fathers, and of all ancestors, is upon the son. He becomes lame; then unable to stand upright; finally he

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crawls about on his buttocks, a helpless object. The curse has taken effect. 578 593

After a time good-natured people try to bring father and son together again. The son is persuaded to make his father an offering of an ox or a cow in token of repentance. If the father agrees, a day is fixed, and the whole community, including the little children, assembles at the house of the injured father. Beer is prepared, the ox is killed, the son publicly expresses his repentance, and the father his acceptance thereof. Then the people, having heard all the details of the crime,[1] express their feelings in a prolonged groan. A dose of medicine is now given to the son, a stick is put into his hands, and he is bidden to rise and walk, which he does in the presence of all! A similar curse falls upon the man who does evil with one of his father's wives; and there are a very few other crimes which automatically bring on the same punishment. 578 593 783

It is not difficult, from the point of view of modern mental science, to explain the facts. The disability is due to the conviction in the mind of the younger man, strengthened by a similar conviction in the mind of the whole community, that such results always follow deeds like his. Similar phenomena are by no means unknown among Europeans, where the response to each other of mind and body is not so immediate as it is among the more unsophisticated Konde. The man bearing his sin is mentally, perhaps, rather than physically, unable to stand upright; and the conviction having been removed from his mind, 000

[1] [Fighting and throwing down one's father—Analyst]

memories and yarns, eats food made from the flour 755
of a pumpkin, which destroys the virtues of his hunting medicines, and at the same time takes away all probability of his death being the prolonged weariness it would otherwise be.

Fishing nets are drugged to ensure a good catch; 789
but here again caution must be exercised, for a very 226
great catch is an omen of a very large family, which 787
is not always an ambition held by the Konde people.

The mother who has just given birth to a child 846
must not cook food, nor may she warm herself at the 789
common fire; a small fire is kindled for her at which she sits by herself; and when the child goes out of the house for the first time a medicine is put into its mouth to guard it against the ills of the world into which it has come.

Christians do none of these things; but Christians 789
are not as other people. They have passed away from 771
the fear of spirits and from the dread of a world in which anything may happen at any moment; and the fact that they escape the consequences of failure to follow custom is having its effect on the common people, many of whom are cautiously experimenting to see whether they too may live a freer and more unshadowed life; but the belief in the protective powers of such things as I have been describing dies hard.

kind of grass grows there maize will do well, or maybe ground-nuts. 242
Some grass-lands have very poor soil in which no crop at all will grow properly, the one we call *kyusi* for example, or again the one we call *unnyegeni* ("the ant"); no one hoes these lands. Some gardens we hoe on the higher ground, others near the streams, either right in the mud by the water or else in ground that is merely moist. On the higher ground we hoe millet, peas, sweet-potatoes, cassava and some other crops; in the muddy places by the water we hoe yams, building huge ridges for them called *fikimbiko*; and there too we sometimes put in (during the dry season) the shoots of sweet potatoes that we shall later plant elsewhere. If the soil is only a little muddy and is mixed with sand, then we plant maize there. The right soil for beans we call *kilumbo*—a red soil which is sometimes mixed with sand. Ground-nuts we either plant in the *kilumbo* (if it is the sandy kind) or else just in sand. Whenever a man is hoeing a field for millet or ground-nuts or sweet-potatoes, he can tell just from the soil whether his crop will do well or not."[5]

And so also the Nyakyusa well understand the different qualities of 232
pasture. The cattle are herded by small boys but on most mornings one of the men also goes out with the herd to show the boys where to pasture it and what grass-land to avoid.

Into the value of arable land sentiment also enters and men like, 311
ceteris paribus, to hoe their gardens where they themselves or their fathers 769
and brothers have hoed before. So too the value of building plots is determined both by practical and emotional considerations: large and relatively level sites on which bananas grow well are preferred to narrow or steeply sloping ones or to sites where bananas do badly, but, on the other hand, of two equally convenient sites that with family associations is normally preferred. And in the case of building sites religious considerations may also enter. A friend of mine told me that, when his father died, he did not move but left his father's site vacant with the new grave upon it; a year or two later his millet crop unaccountably failed and [787]
the diviner told him that his father's spirit was angry that no one had "swept his grave," i.e. that the plot had been left vacant. My friend did not actually move, even then, for he preferred his own site; he compromised by the performance of a ritual sacrifice to his father's spirit. But in such cases a man will often move to his dead father's site for fear of further misfortunes.

We have discussed briefly the purposes for which and the techniques 000
by means of which the Nyakyusa use their land, and we have indicated a few of the main considerations which lead them to value some particular

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[5] Text written for me by a literate Nyakyusa.

643 769 789 magical powers. And the faith alike in ancestors and in witchcraft gave to every group of subjects a religious hold over their rulers.

(a) THE THEISTIC ELEMENT.

643 764 778 Though the early Kyungus had lived on the stony top of Mbande none of them had been buried there, for "the ground was too hard to dig graves in." They and their successors were all buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by that of the grove where he lies. Thus Kyungu Mwangonde is referred to as "He of Bwiba," Kyungu Mwakasungula as "He of Ipôta," and so on.

643 731 787 782 Now drought and widespread sickness were believed to be caused by the anger either of some dead Kyungu or of the living one. "In time of drought they (the nobles of Ngonde) would go to a diviner to enquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would tell them that it was so and so. So they would tell the (living) Kyungu. And he would give them either a bull or a sheep, together with some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own house, one of the pots which were continually brought by his people as tribute.[1] And he would give them some flour and some cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove. Now the diviner would have told them that he (the dead Kyungu) was angry because they had omitted (for so long) to build his house. So they would begin by building his house in the grove, they would build a miniature hut with rafters.[2] Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fix some of the pieces to the house in the grove—an action which they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And, finally, they would pour out (some of) the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a house in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

643 731 787 "But occasionally if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any of them: 'No—no.'

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[1] *Vide infra* section 4.

[2] This is the custom traditional in the sacred groves of all important chiefs, both in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa. We have seen it done among the Nyakyusa. The hut which we saw built was between two and three feet high.

And at length he would tell them that it was the living Kyungu who 643
was angry because so and so had insulted him. Then there would be 731
no sacrifice in the grove at all, but the nobles of Ngonde would go to
the one who had insulted the Kyungu and charge him with it, asking 787
him what he meant by thus killing them all, would not the whole land starve! And so the wrongdoer would take a cow to the Kyungu who, thereupon, would address the nobles of Ngonde, saying: 'If it was my anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have been my anger, it must have been some one (of the dead Kyungus) whom you forgot to ask about.' And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again!

"If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry and they must have forgotten someone, they had better go and divine again. And so they would; and then the diviner would tell them that it was so and so (one of the dead Kyungus), and they would go and sacrifice in his grove."

Thus the belief in the power of the dead Kyungus, a power in 643
which their living successor participated, was one of the factors of the 769
central political institutions of Ngonde. The Kyungu did not himself
sacrifice in the sacred groves but the nobles of Ngonde did so, with 788
materials provided by him, and from these sacrifices the whole plain 731
was believed to benefit. While to insult the Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with drought or disease in reply. And we have already seen, in the story of Mwakasungula's return from exile,[1] that other prominent members of the royal family also were believed to share this power.

The absence of central political institutions among the Nyakyusa 643
was, as we shall see, mainly due to economic causes; but in part also 731
this difference can be traced to the climatic difference acting upon similar religious faiths. The Nyakyusa had in the Lwembes, the hereditary chiefs of Lubaga, a line of religious paramounts. Chiefs from all over the district sent gifts to them to ask for health and rain. That they never achieved any secular paramountcy at all was mainly because they were poor. But the difference of rainfall was important too. Droughts in Ngonde occurred frequently, and each one made the people remember their Kyungu's power. North of the Songwe droughts were rare and slight.

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[1] p. 27.

643 Nor were rain and health the only blessings which were sought in
the sacred groves round Mbande, general fertility, the peace of the
769 country, the absence of rats and the success of the ivory trade were
778 believed to depend in part on the favour of the dead Kyungus. And we have a little evidence that some of these other blessings also were believed to be withheld by the anger of a living Kyungu.

The religious powers of dead and living Kyungus, however, were only believed to be effective in the Ngonde plain; the fiefs of the hills, certainly, and, as far as we know, the chiefdoms of the Nyondos and Kamemes also, were unaffected by them. And this fact is correlated with the slighter secular hold which Mbande had over the hills as compared with the plain.

769 Two notable religious rituals of the plain must now be mentioned.
It was customary, first, to clear out the ashes (*ukujola ihikungu*) each
796 year after the break of the rains. In traditional belief the spirits of the ancestors, whether of chiefs or of commoners, were closely associated with the fires in the houses of their descendants; and so it was only by clearing out the old fires regularly that the spirits and their potential anger could be driven away. Every religious ritual which deals with the ancestors, whether in Ngonde or among the Nyakyusa, has the function of driving them away. For, while the Christians believe that sustained communion with God may be a blessed state, the pagans in Ngonde and among the Nyakyusa believe that sustained communion
●[787] with the ancestral spirits is always terrible and dangerous; prophecy may flow from it, but if the communion is not broken, if it continues too long, then evil will result; and prophecy is nearly always prophecy of evil. In pagan belief the spirits of the dead come constantly to "brood" on man and his works and have constantly to be satisfied and driven away by ritual.

"Always they used to clear-out the ashes at the new year, at the first hoeing, at the break of the rains in December. They feared that death and disease would spread through the land if they continued living with the old fires, that the spirits in the ground, both the spirits of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry; let them drive the spirits away and hoe in peace. They always remembered to do so each new year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually, they never forgot. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to clear out the ashes; and then they would hoe in peace. And at other times too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the ashes again."

The nobles of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave the order to clear out the ashes; messages were sent to the great chiefs and even here it was rather position than area that was at stake : " We object to their proximity, let them move further off," said the chiefs of Ngelenge. 669

Civil wars varied in size and importance from little local fights between neighbouring villages, fiefs or chiefdoms to more extensive fights between groups or even whole houses of chiefs. And in every case the political organization took on, for the time, a military character. Great-commoners led their villagers to war, chiefs their great-commoners ; the senior of a group of brother chiefs summoned his juniors to help him, while a great chief summoned all the local chiefs of his house. But only the Kyungu himself could summon the territorial nobles.

Now leadership in war is a factor of political authority ; the great chiefs, nobles, chiefs and great-commoners derived part of their status from their military functions. But, on the other hand, it is equally true to say that it was the other factors of their status which enabled them to exercise this military authority.

In every war, for instance, there were religious elements. Chiefs had war medicines and prayed to their ancestors for success ; while the loyalty of the great-commoners and people to their chief had both a spiritual and an economic importance. Sometimes, in peace, the leading commoners would dream of war and, if they dreamt of running away, then their chief would hastily kill meat for them. Such dreams were witchcraft and, unless promptly dealt with by a feast, were held to be a certain harbinger of future defeat. [789] [787] ●

" In civil warfare the Kyungu never took any part at all, he remained impartial at Mbande. His sons fought one another by themselves." (But what of the war, between Ngelenge and Ngana, did he not help his own sons in any way?) " No, he did not. For both ' the cousins ' and ' the sons ' alike were his children, he was the father of all."

(b) *TRIBAL WAR.*

The procedure of tribal warfare and that of the occasional punitive expeditions against the Kyungu's subordinates was the same. Messages were sent by the *valukuta* to all chiefs and nobles of the plain to come to Mbande. There the more important of them entered the Kyungu's house and were given their orders by him personally : " And then, when the Kyungu had told them whom to go and fight, he would finish up by saying ' That is all then, go away now and call down blessings on your arms.' So they would leave his house and gather all together, chiefs and their men, and pray." 721 [202]

The premier noble of Ngonde would begin, reciting all the names of the sacred groves of the Kyungu and asking each one to bless them in their fight. Then after him each great chief in turn would pray in like 726

ever made to the spirits, but when some member of a family or his wife or 769
child falls sick the anger of the spirits is often suspected as a possible 753
cause. There are usually other reasons suspected as well, and so the [787]
sickness is taken to a diviner for diagnosis. Various causes are suggested
to the diviner and he selects one among them. If the anger of the spirits
is selected then this senior kinsman must pray for the one who is sick, if
he is to recover. When half-brothers live at a distance from one another,
after their father and his brothers have died, then each may pray to the
spirits to cure a little sickness in his own family but if the sickness persists
then a message must be sent to the senior kinsman. And, as the anger of
the spirits is due to wrong doing, the sinner must reform his ways as well.

The wrongs which rouse the spirits to anger are usually breaches of 673
family morality. If a son does not respect his father or insults him, if an
heir neglects to feed and provide for the dead man's children, then when
sickness falls on him or his own children it will probably be traced to the
anger of the spirits at his behaviour.

Space does not allow any full analysis of religion in family life and in 754
the relationships of kinsmen and affines. Not only the ancestor cult but 771
witchcraft and magic are factors in them. A man's neglect of a wife or
his cruelty to her may, it is believed, lead to his falling sick through her
witchcraft and that of sympathetic neighbours; his relations with his
father-in-law are affected by the fear that if he offends him, his father-in-law may, by magical means, kill his children, and so on.

Wider kinship groupings than the family gather at ceremonies and 614
are recognized in the rules against incest. But there are no clans; there
is no descent group continuous down the generations with a common
name and definite membership. Each individual family has its own
penumbra of kinsfolk, the effective kindred of a man and his son, or of
two half-brothers are not all the same, while each single person is especially related by respect, affection and mutual obligations to particular
kinsmen beyond his own family. Descent, as we have seen, is patrilineal 611
except in the case of illigitimate children. A man asked for his *ekekɔlɔ* 614
always recites first the names of his paternal forbears as far as he can [848]
remember. But if he is related through mother or grandmother to a
chief he usually volunteers this fact as part of his *ekekɔlɔ*; and questions
always elicit some knowledge of his mother's paternal kinsfolk and a
statement that "they are my *ekekɔlɔ* too." Descendants of a common
grandfather (either paternal or maternal) are to-day forbidden to marry, 582
and no case of infringment has come to my notice; descendants of a
common great-grandfather are supposed not to marry but, I am told,

769 come to it. But, on the other hand, everyone knows when a sacrifice is
778 taking place, and, in spite of the influence of missions, most people in the
793 pagan community believe in its efficacy.

782 Sacrifices are prompted either by actual misfortune or by prophecies
787 of it. The four sacrifices which I have seen myself were all stimulated by an actual shortage of food, and the hereditary priests have often told me that " now-a-days the chiefs do not listen to us until hunger comes." But, traditionally, sacrifices are said to have been usually prompted by prophecies of coming misfortune which was then averted by them. In each chiefdom the ruling great commoners, the hereditary priests and some private persons as well are believed to have the power of dreaming of misfortune (*okokunguluka*) before it comes. And the chiefs are said always to have listened to these dreams, formerly, and to have acted upon them.

778 Among the groves there is an order of seniority ; the older the grove
173 the more chiefdoms are concerned in the sacrifices there. And in Selya is the most important grove of all—Lubaga. All the chiefdoms of Selya, many of the Nyakyusa proper and even some of the neighbouring chiefdoms of the Mwamba are traditionally concerned in its sacrifices. Lubaga, the Nyakyusa say, is the grove of Lwembe, one of the original chiefs who came down the Livingstone Mountains from the East, eight or nine generations ago ; and from him all the present Selya chiefs are descended. The ancestor of the chiefs of the Nyakyusa proper was a brother of Lwembe ; and though the Kukwe and Mwamba chiefs are not related, yet those of the Mwamba who are nearest to Lubaga used to send cows there for sacrifice as well, because of the great reputation that this grove had.

622 Sacrifices are still made in the country of the chief of Lubaga
782 (Mwakisisya) for all the surrounding chiefdoms, but the full ritual has not been carried out for fourty years. Traditionally each chief of Lubaga was ritually installed into a position somewhat resembling that of Sir James Frazer's " Divine Kings," a position hedged with taboos, in which not only the sacrifices he made to Lwembe but his own health and fertility also were believed to be intimately connected with the prosperity of his own and neighbouring chiefdoms. But the present chief has never been properly installed, nor was his father before him. The sacrifices at
[173] Lubaga are believed to benefit not only the Nyakyusa but also the next tribe to the East, the Kinga, who live on the heights of the Livingstone Mountains ; for Lwembe, they say, was born a Kinga and moved down the mountains to Lubaga, taking the fertility of the soil with him. And

173 773 It is surprising to westerners, whose whole framework of reference is shaped by the conception of historical time, that the heroic myth is not more explicitly dated by the volcanic eruptions known to have taken place near Lubaga,[1] but to the Nyakyusa the sequence of events does not appear important except in so far as it determines seniority.

[177] Nowadays, with the changing form of the society, there develops a new mythology. Kyala is described by younger men as a creator, apart and distinct from any hero or ancestor, and they reject any suggestion that he was once on a footing with Lwembe and Kyungu. The more conservative fit Christian names into the heroic myth. One version goes as follows:

> Kyala had two sons, Kyala the elder who was Mbasi or Satano, and Kyala the younger who was Jesus. Kyala the younger made corn, and cattle, and fire, and cooked meat, and men ate; then Mbasi or Satano was furious because his younger brother was outdoing him, and killed him, and became the only one.

Here the traditional theme of the jealousy of the senior is dominant, but generally it is the power of the heroes over fertility, under the old dispensation, that is stressed.

[787] [177] Many people tell today of old prophecies concerning the coming of Europeans and of the triumph of a new religion. To the Christians these provide some bridge between the past and the present, for they interpret the words of pagan prophets as evidence of their foreknowledge of a truth they had not yet been taught.

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[133] [1] D. A. Harkin, 'The Sarabwe Lava Flow, Kiejo, Rungwe District', *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, September 1955, suggests that the most recent eruption in the district, that of Kiejo, took place about 1800, but this conclusion is based on the description of the eruption by *one* man, and the statement that his great grandfather witnessed it. That *some* ancestor of Andulile Kajigiri witnessed the eruption is likely, but had it taken place only three generations ago it might be expected that other families also would have had a tradition of the event. Kiejo is clearly visible from Mwaipopo's country and had the eruption taken place early in the nineteenth century either the chief Mwakagile (59) or his father Mwamukinga (43) must have observed it. Their descendants are emphatic that there is no tradition of their having done so, though it is commonly known that an eruption of Kiejo occurred in the distant past.

(28) of Mwampondele (27) who had fled from the stool and had died. 643 [761]

The chosen man was secluded in a hut, lying on a litter with his priests, who kept him company (*ukumpanja*), just as a nubile girl is secluded and lies on a litter with her maids, or a young chief with his village headmen at his 'coming out'. Here is the account of Mwasesi, the oldest of the priests of Lubaga (a man of about seventy-five) who saw the installation of the last Lwembe, Mwakisisya (56).

> A skin and a head-pad of leaves (*ingata*)[1] are brought by the Kinga. The priests catch the chief and set him on these; and then he cannot run away, it is taboo. I, Mwasesi, would sit on one side of him and my friend on the other, and force him to sit on them. Then we plead with him and say: 'You are the Lion, the Leopard, the Snake, the Banana, the Bean, the Millet, the Cow Pea, and the Lentil.' (Lentils are very important, you know, because it is with them that we celebrate the ritual, and with cow peas.) Then, after a time, he says: 'Leave me', and he goes to find the cow; this cow is just for the priests to eat that night. Then we take him into a certain house, cut leaves and spread them for a litter; and we keep him company there on the litter for some time. Then he sends messages to Mwakyusa (38), to Mwankyuse (33), and to Mwakisambe (30), and the Kinga [i.e. their descendants]. Each chief who is Lwembe's descendant sends commoner priests . . . they gather to induct him into Lubaga, he who was in the house. It is just like the 'coming out' ritual for a young chief. 643 788

The Lwembe in his own person, and in a lesser degree his 'sons' 643 who are ordinary chiefs, are identified with the power of growth. Not only must the Lwembe not die with the breath still in his body, or with his hair and nails still upon it, but when he is chosen the priests test whether his reign will be long or short [787] (perhaps whether they can permit him to live or not) by taking a little millet, putting it in a banana leaf and watching to see whether it sprouts or not. 'If it sprouts and grows at once he will live long; if it does not, he will be the priest [i.e. divine king] but will die very soon.'

Because the power of making rain, food, milk and children lay 643 784 in the body of the Lwembe he was fearful and terrible. 'No one built close to him, it was taboo, no one touched Mwakisisya (56) . . . if he wished to make it rain he would make it rain all

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[1] The Kinga priests spoke of a cloth to wear and a stool and an axe which were kept in the inner part of the hut of the Lwembe's great wife and which no man, save a priest of Lubaga, might see.

782 [643] [793] and come home 'very thin', but just when this happened was not clear.

We turn now to the account of the three sacrifices witnessed at Lubaga which illustrates (*a*) the occasions of celebration, (*b*) the procedure, and (*c*) the tensions between the participants. In the ritual described on pp. 35-8, Mwakilima (111) complained that most of the chiefs of Selya did not even recognize his ritual supremacy by sending cattle to kill at Lubaga, but Kasitile the priest retorted that Mwakilima himself, in his capacity as a chief, was slow to provide the cattle for sacrifice required by his own priests.

In July 1935, two Kinga priests, Kikungubeja and Nsyanigwa, came from the Kinga chief Mwakalukwa to Lubaga, with an offering of hoes. A bull, provided by Mwakilima (111) as chief of Lwembe's line, was then killed beside a tree planted at the 'coming out' of Mwakisisya (56), the last Lwembe, on the site on which the house of his second wife, Kitega, was built, and the meat was thrown into the old banana grove close by. At the end of September the same two priests returned (each accompanied by a grandson) bringing bamboo beer and 10*s*. and a hoe with which to buy a bull to sacrifice again, for the Kinga were suffering
[787] hunger and a prophet in their country had gone into a trance and prophesied cold, disease, and hunger, and urged the chiefs to pray. No fault had brought the hunger, they said, but 'the shades wish a cow. The shades say: "Formerly we ate much, now you do not kill cows for us, indeed we wish to eat. . . ." Therefore much hunger affects our country. It is on this account that we Kinga come with a bull and hoes. When the blood of the sacrifice soaks into the earth then the shades are satisfied, and they also receive the meat from the upper foreleg (*ijammapa*).'[1]

The initiative came from the Kinga who were suffering most
[731] severely, but the Nyakyusa were also complaining of scarcity. The weather was very hot and dry and Mwakilima (108) remarked to Kasitile (86) the priest, who had come up to Lubaga for the sacrifice: 'You have killed us with this sun.' He was referring to the unusually small yield of early maize and beans which had been scorched by the drought. Kasitile replied: 'No, all of us [are responsible], the sun has hated us.' Both men smiled.

Five days after the Kinga reached Lubaga (28th September 1955) the sacrifice was offered up. The men concerned gathered in

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[1] The sacred cut. cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*, p. 96.

782 children, not the married ones with wives. Kissoule and I both
796 have our children anointed now.'

[783] This ritual was not complete because Mwanjala shirked the
[643] crucial act of remaining in the grove until a python licked him.
The Kinga priests were continually nagging at the Nyakyusa for
[793] their failure to provide an acceptable Lwembe, but it is doubtful
[177] whether in 1935 Mwanjala II would have been acceptable to any
of them since he was old and ailing. It was Mwakilima (111) that men wanted and he steadily refused to be installed.

[787] The next ritual observed at Lubaga was in March 1937. An ordinary commoner of Selya (not a priest) named Kijaja had been prophesying repeatedly: 'I do not sleep, you will not eat the crops you hoe if you do not go to Lubaga.' He was taken to his village headman and thence to the chief Mwaihojo (147) who finally, two years after he had begun prophesying, agreed to find a bull. Word then came to Kasitile (86) who notified the commoner priests of chief Mwaipopo (116) and sent a message to the priests of Lubaga. Kasitile (86), together with three other priests of Selya (Mwalukuta, Nyama, Mwamakunda) and Godfrey Wilson, set off early one morning from Kasitile's house to take the bull (brown streaked with black, called *ingombe isolola*) to Lubaga. On the way they called in at Munyoso's house, where the Kinga stop on their journey to pour a libation of beer (*vide supra*, p. 27). Kasitile asked Munyoso, 'Shall the bull enter?' and he replied, 'Yes, let it come into the house', so it was tied up inside while the party talked with Munyoso. He was sick and did not want to accompany them. The others pressed him, and at first he refused. Whereupon Mwalukuta said: 'Very well, then, we are at your place, let the bull return and we will go another day', in other words, refusing to go without him. 'No, that is taboo,' said
[784] Kasitile, 'once the bull has faced towards Lubaga and entered a house here it is taboo for it to turn back. The shades will be angry.' And so Munyoso went with them.

On the way they passed a group of men hoeing hard. One of them called out: 'Where are you going with that bull? Where are you off enjoying yourselves?' 'Ah, you fellows,' answered Kasitile, 'do you ask where we are going? We visit where our fathers always did.' They understood at once. 'Oh thank you, thank you,' they cried. 'You,' went on Kasitile, 'do you call that work? Are you growing your own food? No, you lie still and eat without effort. It is *we* who exert ourselves for you' (implying

643 too hard to dig graves in'. They and their successors were all
778 buried in the valley, each in a different spot. Over their graves
trees were planted and grew up to form a ring of sacred groves
[766] round Mbande. Each grove has a name and the Kyungu who is
buried there is usually referred to, not by his own name, but by
that of the grove where he lies. . . . We traced sixteen groves in
the plain surrounding Mbande and the nobles who pointed them
out remembered participating in celebrations at all except that
of the last Kyungu. The ruling Kyungu and the spirits of his
[769] dead predecessors were believed to form one divine company, the
anger of any one of whom had terrible effects, and both living and
dead were placated with offerings.

In time of drought the nobles of Ngonde would go to a diviner
778 to inquire who it was who was angry; they would mention all the
787 names of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn and he would
782 tell them that it was so and so. They would inform the living
Kyungu and he would give them a bull or a sheep, together with
821 some beer—they would take one of the pots of beer from his own
643 house, brought by his people as tribute. And he would give them
some flour and cloths also. Then they would go with them into the grove and build a miniature hut. Next they would kill the beast and hang some of the meat up on a tree—the rest they would eat later outside the grove. Then they would tear up the cloths and fasten some of the pieces on to the hut in the grove—an action they would explain as 'giving him cloths'. And finally, they would pour out some of the beer and the flour. Nearly always, in time of drought, they would thus build a hut and make an offering in the grove of the Kyungu whom the diviner had mentioned.

But occasionally, if one of the chiefs had recently insulted the
643 Kyungu, they concluded that it was the living Kyungu himself
688 who was angry. They would go to a diviner and mention all the
787 names of the dead Kyungus, but he would refuse to accept any
689 of them: 'No . . . no.' And at length he would tell them that it
was the living Kyungu who was angry because so-and-so had in-
821 sulted him. Then there would be no sacrifice at the grove at all,
but the nobles of Ngonde would go to the one who had insulted
the Kyungu and charge him with it, asking him what he meant
by thus killing them all, would not the whole land starve? And
643 so the wrongdoer would take a cow to the Kyungu who, there-
821 upon, would address the nobles of Ngonde, saying: 'If it was my

anger which brought the drought then it will rain (for I am no 643
longer angry). But if the rain does not come then it cannot have
been my anger, it must have been someone [of the dead Kyungus] [821]
whom you forgot to ask about.' 'And if, after that, the rain came soon, then it was not likely that anyone would insult the Kyungu again.' If, however, it did not rain, then the nobles of Ngonde would approach the Kyungu once more and ask why it had not rained. He would say that he did not know, that he himself was certainly not angry, and they must have forgotten someone, they
had better go and divine again. And so they would, and then the [787]
diviner would tell them that it was so-and-so (one of the dead Kyungus) and they would go and sacrifice in his grove.

Thus to insult Kyungu was not only treasonable, it was blasphemous, and the whole plain was believed to be cursed with [687]
drought or disease in reply. An 'insult' might mean any neglect [688]
of the obligations of the chiefs and nobles and commoners of the plain to their lord.

The people of Ngonde hoed large fields as tribute to the
Kyungu and if they failed to do so 'he grew angry and poured all [651]
the water out of the pot in which he kept his rain stones'. (*vide* [789]
infra, p. 114) and 'the sky dried up'. Then the chiefs called their men to hoe. . . . 'They hoed and hoed and hoed and their wives planted, then the rain came in a torrent. . . . Kyungu created much rain.'

Or if an elephant hunter neglected to send the Kyungu one of [651]
the tusks of any elephant he killed he would not kill another. 'The
country beneath was angry . . . the shades of the dead Kyungus [769]
. . . they were angry saying: "Why do you stint our child?" '

The rainfall in the Ngonde plain is less than half what it is in 643
the Nyakyusa valley and anxiety about rainfall was constantly 132
shown in the communal rituals; elephant hunting was also a 771
matter of concern in a way in which it was not among the Nyakyusa and this too is reflected in rituals; but there was also the 788
preoccupation with health and fertility, as in the prayers at Lubaga. In the groves circling Mbande the nobles prayed: 'May
the sterile bear children, may the cattle and fowls increase, may [782]
the children sleep and not cry at night, may the witches not injure anyone.' And as we shall see, it was health and fertility that men had in mind when they cleared out the ashes each year after the break of the rains. 769

Towards Christmas time, when the first maize and the first 796

future boundary between the two halves of the chiefdom, where 622
it will split the next generation. They serve as beacons[1] and are 643
cited as evidence both of the 'coming out' and of the division of 796
land in any later dispute. At the same time the trees are symbols 824
of chieftainship and with their growth the success of the reign is
mystically linked. According to one account, 'four headmen fetch [423]
the cuttings and the young chief stands between them (*vide plate* 6) and tells the trees to grow well, and the others say: "We are planting you likewise, we are at the ritual of establishing a new chieftainship, you are a symbol for our chief, spread branches that our young headmen and other people may rest in your shade." ' A doctor assists at the planting, burying at the roots a live white sheep and medicines, which, it is said, later turn into the lions or leopards which protect the trees from the impious (*vide infra*, p. 58); and he sweeps beneath the trees, a symbol of what the senior headman must do in future, for it is his duty to 'watch over the trees'. In Nyakyusa thought, village headmen are an integral part of chieftainship—it cannot exist without them—and the trees symbolize *both* the chief and his lady and the two senior headmen. The same informant (well known as a doctor for the 'coming out') told us: 'It means we are planting the chief and his lady; *umpandapanda* is the herd to herd *indola*, which is the more important. *Umpandapanda* is the woman, it may dry up, but *ulupando* (*indola*) never does; it is the chief, it is familiars (*ulupege*). but *umpandapanda* is not', and a moment or two later, 'the *ulupando* is the senior village headman, *umpandapanda* is the junior headman'. The strength of the chief is associated with the growth of [787]
the trees. If these trees go dry the reign will not be successful, the chief will be defeated in war. If they flourish and grow the reign will be successful, the chief is a ruler. The *indola* planted for Mwaijonga (82) is shown proudly by his great-grandson, and Mwambete (162) who had a long reign and an enormous family boasted of the size of his *umpandapanda*—'a great spreading tree'. Ideally the young chief should, in due course, sit in the shade of his *indola* with his headmen, to settle disputes.

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After the trees are planted the young men build their senior headman's house and the doctor sets up his hearth bricks, burying medicine beneath them also. The marriage of the chief follows.[2]

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[1] cf. D. Kerr-Cross, 'Crater-Lakes north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, v, IV (1895), p. 117. [113]

[2] According to most accounts, but *vide infra*, p. 56.

married. Thus, yet another bond is forged between chief and 643
headman, for he who provides marriage cattle is 'father' to him
who marries, and the chief's wives acknowledge this by avoiding 583
the village headmen of the senior generation as they do their
father-in-law. Once the chief's ritual marriage is complete the [834]
sex taboo is lifted and such of his men as are already married are
joined by their wives. In theory, though not nowadays in practice,
the taboo is observed until the marriage of the chief.

All through the ritual of the 'coming out' the idea of a new 643
beginning is expressed—a new site for the villages, new houses,
new fire, new power for the young men. The events of this ritual, 561
the seclusion, the lying on a litter, the prohibition on washing, 796
washing with medicines in the doorway of the hut, the admonition, 181
are directly parallel to the events of the rituals of death and
puberty which, we have argued in a previous book,[1] are dramatizations
of death and rebirth. There seems little doubt that the
'coming out' is yet another celebration of this theme. The young
men enter an enclosed house—that of the senior's mother—
and 'come out' (*ukusoka*) renewed as a child 'comes out' (*ukusoka*)
of the mother's womb. No Nyakyusa informant volunteered such
an interpretation, but, when it was suggested, it was eagerly
accepted as expressing the real meaning of 'coming out'.

(*b*) THE CHIEF'S MEDICINES

Reference has already been made to medicines used by chiefs 643
and by village headmen at the 'coming out' and we must now 778
examine them more closely. The great medicines of chieftainship
are *ifingila* and their function is to create *amanga*, i.e. spiritual
power, and *ubusisya*, i.e. dignity, majesty, in order to make the
chief fearful 'so that men obey him'. The medicines are comparable
to robes of office for they are designed to give their user
assurance and fill the commonality with awe. The Nyakyusa
also think that chiefs and headmen should be 'heavy' with 'pythons [787]
in their bellies' which give them the power to see and fight
witches. Without such a 'python' a chief or village headman [754]
cannot fulfil his duty of 'watching over the country by day and
by night' and if a man is not born with one he may develop it
through the proper use of medicines. This notion has been examined
elsewhere.[2] The *ifingila* medicines are also thought to give
courage and ferocity (*ubugasi*) in war, with luck in seizing enemy

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[1] *op. cit.*, p. 205.

[2] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 97-102.

643 replied: 'Why does he deny it? He told me once: "I have a thing
778 which kills people!" ' Then, turning to the man: 'Go and fetch it
789 out into the light.' Mandala went and we heard that he brought
[754] out another medicine, not the one asked for, he brought it to the
headmen and Mwaipopo. Mwaipopo (who, being a chief, knew *inyifwila*) rejected the one Mandala brought saying: 'This is not it.' Then Mandala brought out another and again the chief rejected it saying: 'This is not the one we want.' Then he brought out a little bag made of bark-cloth. They sought a doctor to clear it out. All this happened in secret; we heard of it but did not see it. But in Court Mwaipopo turned Mandala out of his country 'because he had admitted that he was wicked', and Mwaipopo reminded the other chiefs in Court of a previous case of a man in Mwangomo's country who had used this medicine.

Inyifwila is made out of a python 'as thick as a man's thigh' which has been killed by crawling over razors. In Ngonde we were told:

> A certain snake they call *ngone* is killed in the hills to the west. They build a hut, closed, with a man inside ringing a cow bell and razors all over the roof. The snake comes and crawls over the roof, trying to get in and so dies. Then the doctors come to 'close it up'. When they have done so they cut it up for medicine—*inyifwila*; some is brought to Kyungu direct . . . some is taken to the doctors, and it is the doctors who give it to the chief.

A similar story was told in BuNyakyusa but they got their
[825] *inyifwila* from the Sangu and Hehe, to the north and east, not
from the west, and in their account the trap was baited with a
goat, not a man, and it was the blood of the python (*isota*) shed
on the surrounding grass and on the trap itself which was used for
medicine. To test the medicine the doctors gave a little to a
[787] chicken; if the chicken died the medicine was satisfactory; and
the remains of the chicken were burnt and the ashes used as
tested *inyifwila*.

'That snake is awful (*nisya fijo*), no one approaches to kill it.
[825] No! If it were speared everyone would die.' And because the
python which is so terrible is thought to be linked with the rain-
[821] bow it, too, is disliked. 'We fear the rainbow very much, we say
it appears when a python looks up to the sky; if we are near a
river we run from it for pythons live near rivers. . . . No, we are
not mistaken, it is so.' The essential quality of the python is
ubusisya (fearfulness, majesty, dignity) and this is what is required

play one village against another and go to sleep in that section 643
of the country which supports him, but he dare not anger all his 778
headmen. In the same way a village headman dare not anger the 622
main body of his men. In short, public opinion is an effective sanction because those in authority believe that the disapproval of their fellows may bring a fever or paralysis upon them. One of our Christian informants was insistent that, were it not for the belief in the 'breath of men', pagan chiefs and headmen would act tyrannically.

The situations in which a chief or headman fears the breath of men are very varied. We have already referred to the chief who [754] thought his illness was due to his refusal to hold the 'coming out' for his sons when advised to do so.[1] Mwaipopo, before whose court a very bitter land dispute between two of his villages had been brought, refused to give judgement and was careful to sleep in the village that had possession of the land, and therefore less cause for anger.[2] Kasitile, the hereditary priest of the chief's lineage who counted as 'a chief' as opposed to 'a commoner', thought he had angered the village headmen of his generation (who had become priests) by not providing meat for them (*vide infra*, p. 125).

The headmen are responsible for the health of their chief and it is they who go to consult an oracle if he is ill and take him to a doctor. Mwankuga II (151), heir to Mwaipopo's chiefdom, had not [842] begotten a son by any of the wives he inherited from his elder brother who had died. His village headmen[3] went to consult an [753] oracle and were told that it was the wrath (*imindu*) of his father; [787] so they reported the matter to Mwaipopo, who sent a junior kinsman to consult another oracle. The diagnosis was confirmed and Mwaipopo gathered his younger brothers and prayed and [782] told the shades that he had no quarrel with his kinsmen. Then he told the village headmen to take Mwankuga to a doctor for treatment, but this they did not do, so that Mwankuga went to consult a doctor on his own. According to Kasitile it was because the headmen had not taken Mwankuga that the medicine did not work. 'They should take him to the doctor and be present in dreams, to watch over him in dreams.' What the headmen were angry about was not revealed—there was no obvious cause.

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[1] *op. cit.*, pp. 134-5.

[2] *op. cit.*, pp. 188-90.

[3] Mwankuga I who died had 'come out' before Mwankuga II inherited from him, but Mwaipopo (116) continued to rule as chief and draw a Government salary.

may nullify any ritual, but often it is not strong enough to overcome the fissiparous tendencies of the lineage. In theory a celebration at the grove of a senior should precede that at the grove of a junior and sacrifices at Lubaga would be followed by sacrifices at the groves of the 'sons of Lwembe' in order of seniority, but this does not happen in practice nowadays and we doubt whether it ever did, since a hierarchy was not organized and maintained by a central authority as in Ngonde. In 1935 a celebration at the grove of Mwaijonga (82) preceded one at the grove of his great-grandfather Mwakisambwe (30) by a month, as we shall see. 643 769 [578] [688]

Sacrifices are made when a drought or flood occurs, or a plague of locusts, or an epidemic among men or cattle; when fishing is poor in the chiefdoms of the plain, or war is imminent. They occur most often during the 'winter' in the hills, when a malaria-sodden people feel the chill of damp mists and cool south winds, and in October, just before the break of the rains, when the country is parched; but they are not confined to these periods. In theory the village headmen and the priests who 'watch over the country' foresee *coming* misfortune in dreams, and avert it by making the appropriate sacrifices. And they are helped by ordinary people who are dreaming repeatedly or falling into a trance or fit, and prophesying evil and jabbering of 'a black cow, a black cow' or some other appurtenance of sacrifice. But in practice the prophecies generally occur when there is hunger or plague in the land, or an omen (such as a python or a ground hornbill behaving oddly) has been seen. [731] [782] [787]

The dreamers are *abasololi* or *abakunguluka*, and, as these names indicate, they are believed to have descended into the land of the shades. *Ukusoloka*[1] means to go down into something, like the roots of a tree into the earth, and *ukukungula ingungula* means to pluck a banana flower which (as was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*) is a symbol for a corpse and is buried; so the *abakunguluka* are those who have been buried in the earth. '*Abakunguluka* go to the land of the shades and return. . . . An *unkunguluka* plucks up the "blessed grass" (*ikisajelo*) in his swept courtyard and goes beneath and sees.[2] . . . He goes down into the earth beneath and takes the chief to the land of the shades when he dies, and he also sees the witches. . . .' More rarely, the *unsololi* or *unkunguluka* is 791 787

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[1] *Ubusolola*—a breach presentation, the implication being that the infant's head is in *bujuka*, but children born in this way are not necessarily prophets. [845]

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, pp. 77, 212.

791 said just to become aware of future events without any dream.
787 *Abakunguluka* are distinguished from those who suffer from fits
or fall into trances (*abakom' amalago*), but a woman in a trance may
also prophesy and induce the chief and priests to celebrate a ritual,
for it is thought that she too is in communication with the shades.
Men say 'The shade has entered her' or 'Kyala catches hold of her
that she may speak of the matter'. This type of prophecy is something
new among the Nyakyusa. Mwandisi (107) told us that 'it
[177] did not exist in BuKinga whence we came', but had been introduced
from the south, through Ngonde, and it is mainly confined
to women, whereas the *abakunguluka* are men.

There are many tales of famous prophecies. Nsamba (90)
787 claimed that his father (63) foretold that 'there will come a white
thing on the Lake, and it will land on the shore. That will be the
man who will make peace', and Mwakalinga (142) who died
fighting the Germans is said to have foretold his own death.[1]

Dreams and revelations of the possessed concerning public matters are reported to the local village headman and referred to the other headmen and priests, and a prophecy is accepted as valid only after formal discussion. As we shall see, Kasitile was sceptical about the revelations of one man who was repeatedly 'possessed', perhaps because he threatened to become a rival in interpreting public misfortune. If there is doubt, suspicions are confirmed or problems elucidated, by divination.

When they judged a sacrifice necessary the village headman and
769 priests went to their chief saying, 'We do not sleep', and it was his
782 obligation to secure an animal for sacrifice. He might provide
it out of his own herd, but very often the duty of 'finding' sacrificial
cattle was delegated to a junior line—the ruling chief
gave cattle to a younger brother charging him and his heirs with
the function of providing sacrificial cattle when necessary. Today
[177] all the chiefs are reluctant to expend cattle on rituals whose
validity is questioned, and there is often friction between the
[643] senior and junior lines over who should 'find' the cow or bull
required. Their reluctance is illustrated by the following passage
from Godfrey Wilson's diary:

Mwaya (on the lake shore): 22/12/34

It is still stormy; there has been wind and heavy rain for four days. People are saying: 'We are hungry. It is very bad. We need light rain

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[1] According to Mr. Harkin's informant the Sarabwe eruption was foretold a year before it occurred. *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, 40 (1955), p. 21.

chief, brought a bundle of firewood. Mwalukuta I was not 769
expected to enter the grove and he went off soon. His brother and 782
Nyama took a little basket of maize and millet. The chiefs stayed on the edge of the grove and the three commoners entered alone. Mwalukuta II and Nyama built a little hut five feet from the 'grave' with the saplings brought by Nyama's mother. 'We put firewood and food and a little calabash which we have prepared in it, it's for the shades.' The calabash contained millet, maize, pumpkin seeds, ground nuts, and cow peas; and a stem of bananas was put beside it. Mwalukuta swept the 'grave' which was marked by a few small trees, and Mwakasukula killed the cow, which must lie facing east to BuKinga. Mwalukuta spoke the invocation: 'Thou Mwakisambwe (30) . . . Mwakihaba (45) has gone back, but Mwamukinga (44) is here still. . . . Mwakihaba says, "I am no longer a relative, I have gone out."' Then they took the sacred meat from the forelegs of the cow: that from the right leg was buried near the 'grave', that from the left by an *nkuju* tree (a species of *ficus*) forty paces away. The priests ate some roasted meat and intestines with bananas, and the rest of the meat was divided between them and the chiefs. The head went to
Nyama's house and was kept for three nights. The priests ex- [515]
plained that they are forbidden to bathe for three days or lie with [834]
their wives, but on the fourth day they eat the head and after that they bathe and resume married life.

Eighteen days after the sacrifice Mwalukuta went to look and found the stem of bananas which had been left in the little hut
had ripened, and the earth on the grave had been disturbed. This [787] ●
was a good omen. But later his legs began to trouble him—he could scarcely walk—and it was said that certain priests who should have been called to the ritual had not been summoned and
were angry and had cursed him. He fled to a distance and sought a [783]
bull to kill for his fellows.

(*d*) SACRIFICE AT KABALE

The form of sacrifice among the Kukwe is very similar. We never saw a sacrifice at Kabale—our friends assured us that they had been dropped before 1935—but a description by two of the leading priests of the grove of Kabale demonstrates the similarity between the rituals there and in Selya. The only points of difference were that the Kukwe sacrificed fowls as well as cattle, and granddaughters shared the sacred food with grandsons.

CHAPTER VII

CLEANSING THE COUNTRY

769 Sacrifices to the heroes and the shades of the chiefs are holy
and private—only a handful of priests and chiefs may enter the
groves and the details of the rituals are not discussed with other
people. But there are other celebrations in which everyone
796 participates; these are the rituals for cleansing the community—
783 'throwing out the rubbish' (*ukujela ikikunga*)—more specifically
the *ashes* from all the hearths.

In Ngonde the cleansing is organized for the whole kingdom,
from Mbande, but among the Nyakyusa each chiefdom acts
independently. Traditionally, we were told, the *ukujela ikikunga*
was an annual celebration, observed at the 'new year', after the
break of the rains, but it could also take place if there were much
sickness in the country, or plague, or prophecies of evil to come.
It was celebrated (in an attenuated form and by a section of the
community only) in Ngonde in July 1937, to cleanse the country
of a plague of rats, and in September of the same year a somewhat
similar ritual was performed in Porokoto's chiefdom because a
[787] fearful omen had been seen—a ground hornbill had eaten a
chicken. The annual celebrations had been dropped both in
[178] Ngonde and BuNyakyusa before 1935.

As has been shown in the *Rituals of Kinship* the Nyakyusa believe
[769] that too close an association with the shades is dangerous; all the
family rituals are designed to drive them away, to drive them out
[755] of the bodies of the mourners, or menstruating girls, or parents of
twins; and the purpose of 'throwing out the ashes' in all the
homesteads is essentially the same. The shades 'come to warm
783 themselves' at the hearths of their descendants, they 'bring sickness
to the hearths' and so the old ashes are cleared out and new fire is
[775] lighted. The phrase *ukujela ikikunga* is used in Ngonde for clearing
out the litter (*ubufumbo*) after a burial, or an initiation ritual, and
for shaving after a ritual, as well as for clearing the ashes from all
the hearths in the country.

[754] It is also thought that domestic fires are contaminated by
witches who may have cooked the human flesh they steal over
[775] their victims' own fires. In Ngonde it was the connexion between

the shades and the hearths which was stressed; in Porokoto's 783
country people talked mostly of the witches; but it seemed clear [759]
that both conceptions were present when men murmured: 'The
hearth bricks are bad' (*amafiga mabibi*) and they sought to cleanse [775]
them by clearing out the old fire and lighting new. 'To clear out the ashes means they take away all that dirt, the dirt which the witches have brought and the shades; it is the cause of illness.' When witches are thought to be active there is also a public complaint, and a public warning is given 'to whom it may concern' to desist.[1] This occurred in the ritual after the ground
hornbill had eaten the chicken. Above all, men must admit their [578]
angry to one another: 'they fight that the homesteads may be
peaceful'. The theme so familiar in Nyakyusa rituals—that [681]
quarrels must be confessed if they are to be composed—recurs yet again. Though we distinguish the rituals for 'cleansing the country' from sacrifices, on the ground that the whole community participates in the 'cleansing' while the sacrifice is esoteric, the two are closely linked, and a sacrifice commonly precedes or follows the cleansing. We turn now to the detailed accounts of celebrations for 'cleansing' in Ngonde and among the Kukwe.

(a) THE RITE

In Ngonde they used to clear out the ashes at the new year, at the 783
first hoeing (in December) after 'the break of the rains'. They feared 796
that death and disease would spread through the land if they continued
living with the old fires, that the shades in the earth, both the shades [758]
of chiefs and of commoners, would be angry. Let them drive the shades [761]
away and hoe in peace. They always remembered to do so each new year; for the old men used to keep these things in mind continually, they never forgot. The Kyungu would summon the whole country to
clear out the ashes; and then they would hoe in peace. And at other [787] ●
times, too, if prophecy came on someone, they would clear out the ashes again. 'It is to drive away the shade with the sickness that he brings. We throw out the ashes and firebrands because he has come to warm himself over the fire in our houses, we throw out the pots and winnowing baskets because he has come to see us eating; let him go
there (to the grove) and eat what he asked for—we say the shades ask [775]
for food—let him eat here, perhaps a sheep. We say the shades bring sickness to the fire, hence we throw out the ashes and make new fire with a drill.'

The nobles of Ngonde approached the Kyungu and he gave [643]

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[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 109-13.

783 the order to clear out the ashes; messages were sent to the great
796 chiefs and the senior territorial nobles of the plain, and they told
[643] their juniors. A sacrifice was made in one of the sacred groves of
the Kyungus and all fires in the whole Ngonde plain were put out.
And then

> all the chiefs from every country near Mbande and the nobles and all the village headmen and all the ordinary men and women, too, went to Kyimbwe where we threw away the sickness of all the country.

At Kyimbwe, which is the crossroads in the bush, they threw away the ashes of their old fires, and some of the pots and baskets in which food is served; while those few people who could not get to Kyimbwe threw them away from their own houses on the same day as the others. At Kyimbwe new fire was made with a
[372] fire-drill by the nobles of Ngonde who

> ran with it without looking back and the people danced alongside them and speared one another! . . . They said, 'Let us dance, let us fight that the homesteads may be peaceful'. . . . 'Let us throw out the ashes that death may leave the homesteads and they be at peace.' It is to bring out war from within (*abusoje*).

The symbolism is the same as in the rituals of kinship when kinsmen gather to admit their quarrels and press one another to speak out, so that they may cleanse themselves of anger.

The new fire was distributed to the whole plain in order. Great chiefs and senior nobles took it first and passed it to their juniors, chiefs passed to village headmen, and in each group the common people got it from their own ruling noble or their own village headman.

In July 1937, while we were visiting Ngonde, there was a
[731] plague of rats[1] which threatened the food supply, and Bungulu,
[136] the wife of a chief and well known as a prophetess, went into a
[791] trance and revealed that the rats were caused by the anger of the
● [787] previous Kyungu and could be got rid of only by a ritual 'throwing
out the rubbish' and sacrifice. Her husband reported the matter
to Mulwa, the premier noble of Ngonde, to whom the present
Kyungu, Peter—at one time a Church member—had long since
handed over all responsibility for communal rituals. Mulwa called
four of the leading chiefs who were pagan and a number of

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[1] Nothing new in Ngonde. Lord (then Captain) Lugard suffered from them in 1888: F. D. Lugard, *The Rise of our East African Empire* (1893), vol. i, p. 127. In 1937 the country swarmed with rats: in our own camp we killed 70 to 100 each night.

commoners, and they went together to the grove of Mwangalaba, 783
the last Kyungu (elder brother of Peter), with a white hen and 796
sacrificed it there, and prayed saying:

> Mwangalaba go thou to Mwakasungula your father and let him go to Mwangonde, and he to Mwagemo and he to Kiposa and he to Mpeta and he to Mwendemange and he to Kyabala and he to Syola and he to the Kyungu who lived at Mano and he to Ngulube (9) and Lyambilo (12). May he stand by us, may we sleep, may the rats disappear and illness also, may we sleep. Then when we had finished the invocation [I quote Mulwa] we extinguished the fires in all our houses; in the houses of the chiefs, and of Kyungu's great wife Namwilan'ombe, and of us commoners, we threw water on the ashes, but each took some ash, and a firebrand to the crossroads at Kyimbwe where we collected them all and left them to rot; there we threw away the rats saying: 'Let them fly away to Ngulube (9), let them fly away with the wind, let us sleep.' Then we ran to the pasture land to make new fire with a drill. We all took fire there in the bush, each a firebrand and lighted new fires in our own houses and in the house of the Kyungu, that is of his great wife. We arranged it with our wife Namwilan'ombe, because Kyungu had said 'Work with your husbands there'.

'Throwing away the rats' consisted in enclosing a live rat in two winnowing baskets, opening them at Kyimbwe, and flourishing them first in one direction and then in another, releasing the rat in the process. This had been specifically ordered by Bungulu, the prophetess.

(*b*) THE GROUND HORNBILL

In the country of Porokoto (49 K) there was much illness and [164]
many deaths (some, at least, from typhoid) during the dry season [165]
of 1937, and when a ground hornbill—always a bird of ill-omen
among the Nyakyusa—mysteriously attacked a chicken in 787 ●
Syokela village, everyone was horrified. Mwamunda, a village [825]
headman, explained what had happened:

> The headman of Syokela came with two men to Bwilile (senior village headman of his side) and said: 'Tell the chief that a ground hornbill has eaten a fowl at our place. We ask what this means. And also we do not sleep, we are ill.' Then Bwilile told me and we went together to the chief who said: 'I have heard, let us discuss it.' So we gathered at Nsyani's and the headman of Syokela stood up and said: 'My fathers, and friends, and children, and you chiefs, we have come to ask: have you ever before heard of a ground hornbill eating a fowl? (With an air

787 of intense questioning.) We have not, but perhaps you have?' Then we all denied having heard of such a thing; we had no idea what the portent meant and said: 'Let us consult an oracle.' The chief agreed. . . . Then men went to the doctor and the oracle said: 'It is because you have not celebrated at Mwakan'ata's (30 K) place since his death;[1] you must kill a cow and clear the grass at his place. This [775] ground hornbill is your father Mwakan'ata; seek a cow and celebrate and pray, then you will see what will happen.' They told the chief this and he said: 'Must I find a cow then?' But it is we village headmen 783 who have done wrong because some of us said: 'What's a cow for? Let us just pray; why should we throw away a cow?' Others of us said: 796 'Yes, let a cow be found', but the chief listened to those who opposed killing a cow. So we went and prayed without eating anything.

The ritual was put off three times; the first time the people were summoned men of one village had not come; the second time men of another; the third time a headman was missing and also the women had not been called. Finally, on the morning of 28th September, men and women and children gathered on the pasture land just beyond Ilolo village (where we lived). The men and boys sat, with their headmen, by villages, each forming a segment of the great circle round the chief, while the women all crowded together some distance behind him. . . . 'We all go, except the Christians.'

The chief Porokoto, rather nervous in his manner, stood up and addressed the company after one of the headmen had said pointedly: 'We are all women, a man stands in the middle, it is he who speaks.' For women never pray, blowing out water, and commoners in this situation do not pray, only the chief.

POROKOTO: The reason I have called you together is this: there is no peace in the country; there is much cold, many people are shivering with fever, let us drink water and drive away Kyala. This concerns all the homesteads; the cold [i.e. fever] is finishing us. What do you say Mwamunda? [to the headman].
MWAMUNDA: Thank you! We rejoice that you chiefs have remembered. May we sleep well, may there not be illness, may the cold pass, may the children grow well, and all the crops. Indeed we are all in great trouble. Kyala help us, may we be pure (*tujelele*)!

Then the chief called on one village headman after another to speak; and his elder brother, Mwaasalemba, also spoke.

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[1] Porokoto was already sceptical of pagan ritual and has since become a Christian.

MWAFULA: Indeed, may the illness not be great, may the children not cry by night, may the cattle increase, and the fields be fertile, and the fowls also increase. May children sleep. Our fathers always confessed in the house. Now we are shocked at what is happening. 783 796

MWANTIMWA: We say thank you, chiefs, you do not forget us. Let the sickness pass and go away, may the cattle sleep, and you women, may the children grow. May the fields be fertile; may there not be envy of one another. We are sorry because there is much illness. Our fathers say 'Why have the chiefs turned round?'

MWAMULENGA: Chief, we beg you, we thank you, indeed there is sickness. Is there anyone who says in their quarter there is much sickness (more than elsewhere)? Do we say something about sickness?

MWAMUNDA: No, Mwampiki, all of us who have come here are sick.

KILONGO: Yes, we are all rotting.

Mwaikambo commenting on this explained:

If there is sickness one may admit and say, 'It is I, I was angry on account of such and such.' Yes, indeed, they confess openly, because he who sees in his belly (=knows in his heart) that 'It is I who have done this' trembles when his fellows speak many words thinking, 'Perhaps they have seen me.' So he confesses. When he confesses he escapes, they only grumble at him saying, 'Don't do it again.' If someone admits the others say, 'It is he, but we have punished him.' I think that even in the old days he was not driven out, because they hope that, if he has confessed, the illness he caused will go away.

MWASALEMBA: Have you ever before heard of a hornbill eating a hen? We are horrified. Even the prophets did not speak of such an event. [787]

ANOTHER: Indeed, it has never before happened, we are glad that our chiefs have taken the initiative with these words.

ANOTHER: For this custom is old, it began long ago in the time of our fathers. It is the custom to give hope in the homesteads, that we may grow strong.

MWAMPIKI: Always, if the chief is ill it is said, 'Where are you, oh people?' All the homesteads watch over the chief when he is ill. [754] [Mwaikambo commenting: It is said that people have the work of watching over their chief that no one may bewitch him, hence when [177] he is ill they reproach people saying: 'Where are you?' Let the old customs be observed now (implying that they have left all the old customs and hence there is much sickness in the country).]

ANOTHER: There are some who say 'Let so-and-so die that I may move into his homestead. Let envy which brings sickness also go away.'

ANOTHER: If sickness appears let us tell the chief that we may all express astonishment together, asking where the illness has come from, then [753] it will be light, if we all grumble together. [Mwaikambo commenting:

833 and women, it is procreative power, fertility. That power is
783 constantly expelled from the belly but returns again and by that
755 expulsion and return men live.

There was a great deal of criticism from the conservatives
177 because no sacrifice had been made.

787 ● **Mwamunda**: Now people are talking much saying, 'We have abandoned
that which they did formerly, we are doing something else.' People
have many dreams (gesture head on hand as if heavy with anxiety),
many say: 'I have dreamed of the dead, they told me to sacrifice a
cow, to pray, we did not pray properly, that is useless, it will not
effect anything.' So we have told the chief saying: 'Let us kill a cow
at the grave of Mwakan'ata,' he has agreed, but the cow has not yet
783 come.

Formerly, on the night following the day of the prayer we should
796 have eaten the sacrificial cow, the chief would have killed two cows
and the headmen from different villages would have come and eaten
by night, and drunk beer provided by the chief, in the house of the
senior wife of the chief. . . . They ate a little meat, raw, the rest they
roasted. Then in the morning, when they had eaten and were satisfied,
they would go to clear out the house, to throw out the ashes, and to
[372] pray, as we prayed now, and to make new fire by friction in the pasture
land. The village headman made fire with medicine which the chief
gave him, the name of the medicine is Mbamba, it's a tree. To throw
out the ashes means to clear out all the filth, the filth which the
[754] witches and the shades have brought to us—the filth that is sickness. . . .
Do not the witches eat meat at the fire? Human flesh? Some roast at
[775] your fires your bodies which they have seized, some go home with the
human flesh to their own fires, hence comes the filth of the ashes. The
village headmen eat the sacrificial meat at night with the shades, they
celebrate for them with the blood which goes beneath. . . .

If the chief has done something wrong, then those above [i.e. the
village headmen] pray to those beneath saying, 'Let us help one another to punish him who has strayed, but we do not wish that he
[754] should die, let him be ill; perhaps then he will seek something to
nourish us.' Again the night before the throwing out of the ashes they
confess their anger and say: 'You beneath, this our child (the chief)
has remembered us, there is no accusation against him now, may
sickness go away from the country, and children sleep, let us all sleep
and the cows calve. We greet those beneath.' In my childhood I was
repeatedly surprised at night when my father came in, he had a little
parcel of meat. 'Where have you been?' I asked. 'We have been praying.' But since I grew up and became a village headman, and was
recorded as such [by the administration] we have never seen sacrificial
meat.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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10a. KASITILE THE PRIEST

516
787

10b. DIVINATION WITH PORRIDGE

[Facing p. 118]

789 rain started again and it rained for an hour during the division of the meat; then again it lessened and stopped.

A showery and varied day was turned to account by Kasitile. The way he did it was to keep quite silent about the rain and about the insult, but let the others talk. No one directly connected the rain with him in his presence, but they talked about how heavy it was, now and again. If there is too much or too little rain, or Kasitile is known to be angry the weather is noticed and connected with him. The conclusion that Kasitile sometimes deliberately played up to the credulity of his neighbours is irresistible. But when there was a drought he grew very troubled. In January 1938 there was drought in Mwaipopo's country though in some of the neighbouring chiefdoms there had been heavy rain. We went with Kasitile to visit his fellow priest, Mwamakunda, in the bush country. There was discussion about the drought.

Kasitile: I have put in the rain stones, but nothing has happened, I tremble!

[787] **The others**: Kijaja went into a trance and said: 'Let a cow come from Mwakihaba (45), Mwakilima (31) has driven away his senior kinsmen and refused to send a cow, he has refused to return the cow which was given him by his senior brother. Let him return it, instead of saying: "Let the nasty old man (*ikangale*) celebrate there at his place." Then if it comes there will be much rain and food.' [i.e. Kijaja attributes the [688] drought to the refusal of the junior line of chiefs to send the customary cow for the sacrifice at Mbyanga, *vide supra*, pp. 79-80].

[787] **Kasitile**: Kijaja has gone into a trance and prophesied just recently. Kyala has brooded over him recently, he is a new prophet, but I, Kasitile, have not heard [i.e. have not been formally notified]. Had we been together with Kijaja I would have argued with him and silenced him. See! In Mwakihaba's country it has rained; it has rained heavily there, but not here. I would have said: 'Kijaja you are a new prophet. . . .' But I don't know about this rain. . . . Had I consulted an oracle the cause would have come to light.

Mwamakunda (came and sat down): What about this rain? Have you put them in water?

Kasitile: Yes, I have put them in water and nothing happens, I put them in water and nothing happens. I have not consulted an oracle about this rain. . . . I tremble. . . .

Mwamakunda: Yes, indeed! Consult an oracle. . . . Then you did put them in water. . .?

Kasitile: They have lain there two weeks, but the rain refuses to come.

CHAPTER IX

KASITILE THE PRIEST

We turn now from the description of rituals to a personal docu- 793
ment, an account of the illness of Kasitile (86), the leading priest 755
of Selya, the causes suggested for it, and the rituals performed.
His case shows: (i) the power of village headmen over chiefs in
general, more particularly the power of the commoner priests [554]
(village headmen of the previous generation) over hereditary
priests of the chief's lineage; (ii) the persistent linking of misfortune [688]
with sin in both public and private life; (iii) the function of [787]
divination in selecting between possible causes of disease; (iv)
the influences of Christian and Muslim teaching and Western [797]
medical science on a conservative who goes so far as to invite a [177]
Muslim to cut the throat of the sacrificial animal and speaks of
turning Christian in his old age; and (v) the very great importance
attached to 'speaking out' (*ukusosya*) and not leaving anger to
smoulder unconfessed. Beer is necessary for such a ritual 'speaking [273]
out' and the participants are pressed to drink deep, for *in vino
veritas.*

The *dramatis personae* are:

Kasitile (86) of the chief's lineage, priest of Selya [551]
Jane his senior and favourite wife
Jane's younger sister and co-wife
Kilulele a third wife suspected of bewitching Kasitile [754]
Mwaipopo (116) the chief and senior kinsman of Kasitile
Mwakyonde (148) the doctor who was treating Kasitile
Kinga *priests* (i.e. Kikungubeja Nsyanigwa, Kyamba Kitali, *vide* pp. 24-34)
Nguluyo
Njobokosa
Kissoogota
} Village headmen of Mwaijonga (82) and priests of his grove, *vide* pp. 74-7, 84-5
Mwamakunda the elder a hereditary priest, assistant to Kasitile
Mwamakunda the younger (Mwambagoje) son of the elder who often acted in his place

793 NDEMBWE
755 NSOKI
[551] NSESA
[791] A SANGU

Diviners consulted by Kasitile

NDISA a kinsman of Kasitile

793 755 It will be remembered that, in accordance with the custom of delegating ritual functions to a junior line, Kasitile's grandfather (44) had been appointed rain-maker and priest responsible for receiving the Kinga when they came to sacrifice at Lubaga. Kasitile thus held an important public office. He was living on the plain (where he had inherited the estate of his father's younger brother) where his own elder brother (85) died and he came up into Selya to bury him and succeed to his position. But he failed to notify the Kinga priests of his brother's death and they were ● [787] very angry, and told him he would die if he stayed in the homestead, so he fled back to the plain. There he fell ill, and he was carried back to Selya to be treated by the visiting Kinga priests, who told him he was sick 'because he went to the plain in a hurry and they had not given him medicine'. The idea here is that the heir to a chief or priest must cultivate the power that was in his [778] father's body by drinking medicines: Kasitile was 'losing the *ifingila* of his father by not drinking medicines'. Now *ifingila* implies *both* the medicines of chieftainship and the power which they create in the body of a man.

So Kasitile was treated and we quote his own account of what happened:

> The Kinga came to cook medicine by the tree where I pray—it is where the cattle byre of my elder brother was. They put some medicine for Jane [his senior wife] and me in beer . . . and we drank together . . . [783] and they boiled medicines in a pot and told us both to wash with the infusion every day for two months. I found a goat and called the priests Ngulyo, Njobakosa, and Kissogota and . . . they and the Kinga priests ate the meat together, and they told me to stay for two months and return to the plain again, and so I did. Then the Kinga sent for me to come back and I've come up to live. I found a cow, and called the priests and killed it at the sacred grove, Kinyangwa, and all the people ate the meat. Then the Kinga told me to move to my father's old homestead, and I did so this very year.

[753] Before we arrived, therefore, Kasitile had been in conflict with his fellow priests, and he had been very ill, and attributed his

793 trouble is that Mwaipopo (the chief 116) is getting old. . . .'
754 Here Kasitile suggested two different causes for the scarcity in the
[731] country: (*a*) the negligence of the priests, and (*b*) the senility of the
[789] chief. In the old days Mwaipopo would have been smothered, as
Angombwike explained (*vide supra*, p. 63).

On the 9th, Kasitile, much troubled by his cough at night,
[753] expressed a great desire for the return of the missionary nurse to
[757] Kabembe hospital. 'She is killing us by her absence, the black people don't know anything about these things, only the Europeans. Why, I went there and the dresser just gave me an injection without taking my temperature—no European ever does that.'

The following day he sent off his sons with 10 c. to inquire about
[787] his case from a diviner. The diviner said: 'The wives at his home
[753] are gossiping to other people about their husband. People want the husband's body to be light. It is not Jane, because she is his favourite, but the others.' Kasitile said:

I shan't do anything, I said 'Let's leave it.' I am still in Butola [the village to which he moved for safety]. Mwakyonde is giving me medicine for my disease. It drives out the cold which is in my body. Yes, the cold is the breath of the witches coming to throttle me—it's due to my
755 wives' gossip. But it started as a quarrel with other people [non-
753 relatives] first. One day I went to drink beer in Bujege and that night I fell sick; that is how it began. Men are complaining because I, a chief, a senior, do not cook food for them. They throttle me on that account. They say: 'Let us see whether he is really a chief, a senior!' But others say: 'He has done no wrong.' Yes, the sickness took me on the way home from the beer. Perhaps Kyala asked: 'What has he
[776] done?' and found I had done no wrong. If there had not been a Kyala who saves us I would have been dead.

When I consulted a diviner he struck a spear and looked along it,
[787] then he said: 'The disease now is from his wives—the earlier attack was from men, but this one is from his wives. When they gather at the hearth they say: "Come hither, we see him where he sleeps."'

754 'Are the wives witches?' we asked.
753 Kasitile replied:

Yes. They say: 'There is a favourite, we are not beloved.' If a man's wives are good the witches can get into the house, but their cold breath dissipates quickly; you are given medicine and recover quickly; but if the wives are bad they gather together the medicine and press it down, so that it is powerless. One of my wives is very bad, her lineage is bad, it is she who calls to her aid the heavy ones, the witches. The

younger one[1] gossips with her fellow, she does not go to the witches 754
herself, but just talks to the other wife who calls the witches to her aid. 753
These two wives say: 'The favourite has borne many children to her
husband; we are poor' [i.e. the favourite gets an unfair share of her
husband's attentions].

Kasitile speaks of his wives as 'witches' which, according to
Nyakyusa ideas, they were, if they injured him, but he was also
in the wrong to have shown his preference for Jane so clearly. [775]
As was shown in *Rituals of Kinship*, the shades are thought to [689]
punish such favouritism.

Towards the end of August Kasitile went to consult Ndembwe, 791
a diviner and doctor, living nearly a day's journey away in the
hills, who used a 'stick in the ground' as a divining rod. On his 787
return Kasitile reported:

> Ndembwe says it's the 'breath of men', not the wives, but the dispute 753
> about the beer. I paid him 1*s*. and drank three preparations of medicine
> at his place. He is coming here—I have found some beer and I am [782]
> sending to call him tomorrow. Then Kasitile added confidentially:
> About the source of the 'breath' I am uncertain. Ndembwe suggested
> testing my wives. He can see the heavy ones, for in Ndali country he [778]
> has drunk much medicine to give him spiritual power (*amanga*). He
> told me to come home, not to go back to Mwakyonde's country, and [787]
> he is coming to give me medicine to drink and also to sprinkle medicine
> in the house. He will sleep here and see who it is that comes—he will
> know if the wives are heavy, or if it is the people of the country.

Kasitile's uncertainty was apparent. The first diviner had stated
clearly that the sickness came from the witchcraft of the wives,
but Kasitile wanted a further test.

We were away from Selya for some time and did not hear of 753
any further developments in Kasitile's illness until early in 1937. 688
By then a new reason for his ill-health had been put forward, viz.
his impiety in cutting all the branches off a tree growing at the
entrance to a sacred grove which has sprung up over his father's
grave. He cut the tree because it was encroaching on his homestead.
Then he fell ill and he went to consult Ndembwe again.

> He asked me: 'Have you done something wrong at home?' I replied: [787]
> 'No, I have done nothing wrong.' 'But the oracle says you have done
> wrong at home.' I said: 'Perhaps it is because I cut a tree at the

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[1] Sister of the favourite Jane. To accuse Jane's sister would cast a slur on Jane, for witchcraft is normally hereditary.

753 entrance to the grove?' Ndembwe told me, 'You will get no cattle',
688 and indeed the cows are aborting. He told me: 'Brew beer and look
● [787] for a sheep[1] and pray to your grandfather.'

782 Kasitile did not find an animal for sacrifice. He slaughtered a kid 'just for meat', killing it near the grove, but without praying or taking any of the meat into the grove, for it is not customary to offer goat's meat to the shades. His health improved a little, for a
787 time, but again he got worse and went off to see another diviner, saying: 'Perhaps there is some other cause; perhaps Ndembwe is mistaken.' He decided to go to consult an oracle some distance away 'because the oracle near home does not convince us; those who live near know all our wrongdoings; those at a distance don't know the affairs of the homesteads here'. This time Godfrey Wilson was invited to accompany him 'since he was his friend'.

Record of G.W. 8/2/37

787 We left Isumba about 7 a.m. and walked for an hour over the hills
753 through the bush. Kasitile had sent his wives, Jane and Kiluleli, on ahead to tell the diviner, Nsoki, that we were coming. . . . He came in from the fields to meet us and was taken aback by the presence of a
[791] European. Kasitile kept saying: 'Do not be startled, he is from home,
[186] he is our friend.' . . . Food was served, then Nsoki's wife brought out some cooked millet porridge for the divination. He broke off a large piece and began to roll it between his hands. He smeared ointment on his hands and added powdered medicine. . . . He rolled and rolled, sometimes throwing the ball up and catching it again, spitting on his hands meantime. He murmured as he rolled, then at last he said to Kasitile, 'Speak!' Kasitile called his two wives to come near, and he explained his symptoms and the circumstances, how the sickness had fallen on him just after he had cut the tree in the sacred grove.

Nsoki asked for other possibilities. Kasitile: 'Perhaps the country is angry—I am a senior there. If it is the fathers who are angry I admit
[684] having done wrong. Perhaps my wives have committed adultery in the long grass and they are the cause of the illness.' Nsoki rolled and rolled the ball of porridge speaking aloud: 'It is Kyala above?' (looking up).
[775] Kasitile interrupted him: 'Yes, indeed, Kyala, but Kyala stands where he stood at home, does he stand alone? He stands with the fathers.' Nsoki (as he rolled the porridge): 'Your fathers are angry about that grove?' Then the ball of porridge flattened out in his hands and he broke off . . . 'No, that is not the cause' (*vide* plate 10*b*).

Rolling it into a ball again he went on: 'Your wives have committed

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[1] This was Kasitile's own account. Others told us that he had been advised to look for a *bull*.

adultery?' Again the ball flattened. 'It denies it.'[1] Then Kasitile, 787
obviously dissatisfied, spoke: 'Nsoki, three cows have slipped their
calves at my home, I sent to Ndembwe and he said: "Your fathers are 753
angry, you cut a tree, Mwakisambwe (30) is angry; seek something", [775]
so I sought a kid and I recovered. Later I took my bill-hook and cut
all round. Now the illness has begun again, and I thought perhaps it
was because I did not go to BuKinga to buy a bull, because I sought
only a kid?' Nsoki (no longer rolling the porridge): 'Perhaps my oracle
is mistaken, it denies it, Kyala above has sent the breath (*imbepo*) to
discipline you. I asked the oracle saying, "Perhaps it is the fathers?" [776]
but see, it denied it.' Kasitile: 'No, it is not mistaken.' Then he told all
over again the story of his pruning the grove and of his illness and of
his recovery after killing the kid, concluding 'then I cut again and
fell sick.' Nsoki: 'But Kasitile, see! There is much illness about, Kyala
has sent it all through the country, to discipline us.'

Shortly afterwards we left. I apologized to Kasitile for spoiling his
divination for it was obvious, from his face, that it had gone wrong.
He assured me that I had done no wrong but agreed that Nsoki had
been afraid of me. . . . 'He feared your body, Mwaipaja [G.W.], you
are impressive (*nsisya*), no one builds together with Europeans, he
feared to speak. . . . Do you suppose that Kyala alone sent the fever? [776]
No! He stands with people, he stands with the shades.' I asked him
what he thought. 'Ndembwe's oracle was not mistaken, the shades [775]
were indeed angry, but now Nsoki's oracle denies it. It really denied
it, I saw the porridge with my own eyes, so I think the illness is from
another source now. When he spoke of the "breath of Kyala" he meant
"men".' Kasitile lowered his voice as he said this.

QUESTION: But what quarrel have they with you?

KASITILE: None! The oracle denied this. I have done no wrong . . .
(later on) He spoke of the fathers, but he was afraid to speak out—
they are angry; I should seek something.

QUESTION: To eat with whom?

KASITILE: With the village headman . . . (later on) See Mwaipaja, I cut [688]
the grove and at once I fell ill. If you come from doing something and [775]
fall ill, do you not begin to wonder? The shades are angry.

He was quite incoherent. First he said the 'breath of men', then the
shades, then that the oracle denied the shades—'I saw it do so'—then
that it denied witchcraft and that anyway he'd given no occasion for it.
The one thing clear was that the divination could not be accepted as
it stood. Kyala never acts alone in Nyakyusa thought, and Kasitile's [776]
conversation reflected the uncertainty of mind which he had gone to
Nsoki to have resolved and which had not been resolved. His opinion

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[1] He explained later that 'if the porridge becomes fluid and soft, that means it agrees to what has been said; if it does not change, it denies it'.

787 clearly inclined to the shades as it had before the divination, but as
753 before the certain conviction was lacking.

Four days later (12/2/37) Kasitile went to Nsesa in Kituli village
to consult the oracle again 'for that of Nsoki went wrong'. He told us
afterwards 'This oracle supported the finding of Ndembwe's. It said:
[775] Your kinsman who is dead is angry; he says, "Why did you not
[769] celebrate the ritual? I am tired of the hair (*Ngatele nasyo inwili*). And
what did you offer your father after cutting that tree?"' Here yet
another cause of Kasitile's illness is suggested—the neglect of the death
ritual of a kinsman. The implication is that the chief mourners have
[765] not yet performed the concluding rite of shaving which makes it
possible for the deceased to join his fathers. The hair which the
[302] mourners shave off is called 'the hair of the corpse'.

QUESTION: What are you going to do then?

KASITILE: I shall charge the young man, son of my dead kinsman, with
[688] neglect, and tell him to celebrate the ritual that the shades which have
[602] bound me may go out of my body.

QUESTION: And the bull?

KASITILE: If I can find one I shall kill it.

QUESTION: Who will be there?

[793] KASITILE: The priests will be there, Ngulyo, Kissogota, Njobakosa,
Mwalukuta and Mwakasukula,[1] and also Mwaipopo (116) himself.
Were I a commoner I should kill alone with my younger brothers, but
since I am a public personage (*ndi nkulumba*) the village headmen are
there. (To Mwaikambo, the clerk.) It is good at your home in the
hills; here things are bad.

QUESTION: But they also have shades?

[775] KASITILE: But they are not important. Look you, I just cut a tree and
they have seized me and dwell in my body. Are there sacred groves in
[178] the hills? Do men visit them? There in the hills rituals have died; the
puberty ritual and the rituals of the groves are celebrated very little.

On 27th March Kasitile looked in to say that he was going to con-
787 sult a visiting Sangu doctor 'from very far off' about his cough, but
791 G.W. had better not come lest his presence spoil the divination.
Kasitile came again after the consultation, full of excitement. 'What a
753 doctor! That is a doctor indeed! That is a diviner! He took an axe
and divined with it; he took coppers which I brought and threw them
in a little pot, together with the axe, and ash, and he said: "You also
take ash and throw it in" and I did so. Then he looked into the little
pot and said: "You built on the plain!" He knew this without being
told! I said: "Yes".'

SANGU: There was a quarrel there.

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[1] The last two are priests of Mbyanga (*vide* p. 80) who did not in fact come. Mwamakunda, Kasitile's assistant, who did come is not mentioned.

Kasitile: Yes indeed.

Sangu: Now your body is sick, you are coughing. 787 ●

Kasitile: Yes indeed, I am ill, and I am coughing a great deal. 791

Sangu: Yes, it is that quarrel down there. You came with the cough from the plain. 753

Kasitile: Yes, I came with it.

Sangu: You are a priest, you are a senior priest. (He knew this himself!)

Kasitile: Yes indeed.

Sangu: But the cough comes from the quarrel in the plain. If you were not a priest you would have died.

Kasitile: Indeed, we quarrelled over land, over the boundaries, on the plain. I hoed someone else's land—the land of a commoner there. [578]

Sangu: They placed something to injure you.

Kasitile paused in his narrative and we asked how the 'something' operated.

Kasitile: In dreams, by means of their witchcraft. [754]

The Sangu told me: 'It is this which causes you to cough continually, but there is something else also, you did not move to the plain from here without trouble.'

Kasitile: No, I moved with an accusation against me. [775]

Sangu: Yes indeed, you did wrong and now your fathers are very angry. [776]

Kasitile: Yes, I cut a tree.

Sangu: Mother! You cut a tree? The fathers and Kyala are brooding over you, Kyala is angry and broods over you. Pray, pray very much. It is you who are throttling the cattle of the country.

We expressed surprise and Kasitile continued: 'Yes, indeed. The Sangu said: "It is your wrongdoing (in cutting the tree) which is causing the cows to abort. I will clear out the thing which came with you from the plain. Bring 2*s.* tomorrow." He's a great doctor, Mwaipaja.' [688]

The astonishing thing was that Kasitile, a man of considerable intelligence and inclined to query the truth of the revelations of some oracles, was so much impressed by the fact that the foreign doctor (staying in the country) knew that he was a priest and had sojourned in the plain, though to anyone knowing KiNyakyusa well his connexion with the plain was apparent in his speech, and his bearing indicated him as a personage.

Talking of the divination three days later, Kasitile told us the Sangu doctor had said: 'You have done wrong at home. This Kyala (pointing to the little pot into which he was looking) knows that Lwembe and the Kinga and your father are angry, your father is very important, he works with Kyala, he is with him.' 755

As a treatment for the cough the doctor put various ingredients with 791

indeed from the whispering of men and the shades here, but people 754
speak openly, saying: 'Why does he not celebrate the ritual?' The 775
witches do not come into it.

Question: Well, when the witches do throttle someone, do they 753
always call shades, or not?

Kasitile: No, sometimes they throttle a man alone, and the shades are not there.

Question: But your sickness?

Kasitile: Now the priests in their witchcraft gathered with the shades. [793]
The day after we had celebrated Njobakosa came to my place and said: 'We have finished then!' I replied: 'Yes, my body is better now, but the cough is separate, it is from Kyala.' And did you not hear what Mwaipopo asked in his cups—'How did the doctor (the Sangu) know that you are a priest? And that you had done wrong? Indeed they (Kissogota and his fellows) had told him!'

Question: What did he mean by that?

Kasitile: That they had gone to the doctor in dreams to tell him. [787]

Asked about Kissogota's words: 'You are impressive, we are cannibals, we are', Kasitile explained: 'It means, "You chiefs kill cattle for us, you are impressive, that is your impressiveness. Do we kill cattle? No! We eat men, we are witches." Because when we have killed cattle they receive blood, their witchcraft goes away, it stays in its house.'

Question: And your reply, 'You are impressive, you are'?

Kasitile: I replied: 'You are impressive, you are, you are witches, if I were alone what would I do? It is you who brought the chilling breath on me and said I had done wrong. Even though I have not done wrong, you wish to eat meat. If I walk about among you, my body shrinks, it fears.'

Mwaipopo (the chief 116) had also prayed with water the night [782]
before the sacrifice, he helps me in prayer and if he prays at his house,
I help him. We pray with water to bring out everything; if I do not [776]
pray with water then something is left within. I summon all the gods,
all the fathers, and all the shades. (*Apa tukwiputa namesi ko kusyosya* [775]
ilisyu loysa, lenga ndikwiputa namesi po lisyele limo nkati. Nikumpala kyala [539]
gwesa, tata gwesa, abasyuka bosa.)

Question:

Kasitile: Yes, when Kissogota and his fellows came in their witchcraft [787]
to call my shades to their aid, I saw them in dreams, I saw them! And if they correct Mwaipopo like this in witchcraft, together with the shades, he sees them; he complies immediately, he seeks a cow. And if they just come to throttle me I see them. It is the village headmen of the country who come to throttle me, the shades are not there, no, only Kissogota and his fellows, they stand with the shades, not the others they come and suck my blood and they go away again. I do not speak,

754 but I see them. It's taboo to speak. They must seek blood and they go 775 off; we fear them!

Question: Why do you chiefs never speak out if you are throttled?

753 **Kasitile**: If I speak how many would there be to name? Very many! [689] For us it's taboo to accuse a man of witchcraft, but the commoners [554] accuse one another. Look you, do few people keep you company?

Many!

Like us chiefs, everyone comes. It's taboo for us to speak out, we fear. Look you, when Mwambene (Mwaipopo 116) and I were alone we feared to throw out the beer, we said: 'If we throw it out will they leave?' But when Kissogota came, he said: 'All right, I will throw it [152] out myself.' We fear the fierce great priests, the terrible witches, they are angry.[1] We shrink when they appear.

[622] The village headmen of the country call on the priests for help against us, they whisper by the fire, the priests come in their witchcraft, they call on my shades saying, 'Let us punish him', also they eat, [793] together with the shades. Our shades never initiate anything, never; they look to the priests. But with a commoner the shade may initiate matters himself. Yes, people whisper indeed, but is that witchcraft? No! They whisper openly and ask, 'Why did you not perform the ritual?' But even although people are silent, still the shade comes [688] saying, 'Why did you not perform the ritual? I am on the road.' He initiates the thing himself.

Question: But don't people eat meat at the ritual of a commoner?

Kasitile: Yes, and if he does not celebrate it they accuse him, but they accuse him openly.

Question: If the heir buries him with a few cattle?

688 **Kasitile**: If a rich commoner dies and the heir buries him with only 775 one cow, the shades are angry and the people also; their chilling breath comes on his body, perhaps he falls ill himself, perhaps his 774 child falls ill, but the people and witches do not meet together, people are angry here, and the shades there; all of them and the shades too, because he has celebrated with one cow only. People are angry because ● [787] they wish to eat the meat. But the oracle says, 'The shades are angry.' It does not speak of people, it knows that people also are angry, but it speaks of the shades. And at the celebration he prays in the evening, the next day he calls people and kills a cow, and throws the sacred [783] meat in the banana grove, saying, 'Here is your meat, father.' People say, 'Indeed he did wrong, his father was angry', but they do not confess saying, 'It was we', no, they say 'the shades' . . .

[826] We chiefs have bodies which are different, the commoners arrived [554] first in the country, they ate raw food, we fear them saying, 'They eat raw food.' It is we who followed and brought fire. To us they confess

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[1] *Imingogo indali mikalala*. The noun class implies size, ferocity, and dislike.

278 The patient knelt and received the medicine in cupped hands, 842 guiding it into her mouth. Lyandileko hung a little medicine horn on the runnel before pouring. The patient kept the medicine in her mouth until the runnel was removed and she spat through the hole. Then the hole was filled up with the petal off which the medicine had been poured. Lyandileko smeared the patient on the belly with medicine from a horn, and pushed the horn down under her bark-cloth to the genitals, in front, and on to the buttocks behind. As she did this she said, 'If you are barren the banana will rot, if you are fertile I give you medicine to bear a child.' This *was done for each patient in turn. Then the banana suckers were* planted and the medicine from the remaining petals poured into bottles (two made of banana leaves, one a Vermouth bottle) for the patients to take home. They were to take a dose each day for a week. As the treatment was proceeding Lyandileko talked of her successes: 'So-and-so drank twice and her belly sprouted. . . . So-and-so drank and she came back to me pregnant. . . .'

After a week the women came back to see whether their banana suckers had sprouted. Lyandileko explained: 'The banana sucker is the child, it sprouts quickly, it is the belly which sprouts quickly. [787] If it dies they consult an oracle—the woman does not conceive.' And her son added, 'If a woman's sucker dies Lyandileko tells her: "Don't say I have not worked for you, don't you see your banana? You are rotten in yourself, indeed they must have allowed your cord to fall between your mother's legs."[1] They rejoice very much if it has grown.' Each petal represents a child; Lyandeliko used male and female symbols (plantain and sweet banana petals) alternately for boys and girls. One mother who had no child had asked for ten, another with two already for eight, another with three already for six. Lyandileko's arithmetic had gone wrong for there were only seventeen petals altogether. The horn is the horn of protection (*ulupembe lwa ipinga*) and it means here, 'May the "iron" stay nicely within, may it not come out in front or behind, may it stay inside.' (Iron is a symbol for the reproductive [823] capacity of women.) Neither Lyandileko nor her son (who were both forthright in their discussion of ritual) seemed to be conscious of any symbolic enactment of coition, though a knowledge of the symbolism of the death and puberty rituals suggests that.

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[1] Cf. Monica Wilson, *Rituals of Kinship*, p. 145.

787 [278] A second class of medicines is not neutral at all, but itself selects between right and wrong. The most famous is the *mwafi* ordeal which is used to reveal the truth. The *mwafi* poison was formerly administered by a doctor,[1] before witnesses, and the innocent were believed to vomit almost immediately, while the guilty did not vomit at all, or were slow to do so, and fell ill, some even dying. Nowadays *mwafi* is administered only in the greatest secrecy, but various minor methods of divination, all of which turn on the correct use of medicines, are in common use. The 'divination with porridge' has been described (*vide supra*, p. 128). The medicine added to it is spoken of as 'a kind of *mwafi*'. Another method is to rub an inverted wooden cup on a smooth board. Questions are posed, as to the porridge. When the answer is 'no' the cup slips; when the answer is 'yes' the cup sticks. Sometimes a stick of *marika* wood is rubbed on the ground in place of the cup on the board, and there are half a dozen other methods using bells, horns, segments of bamboo, a pipe, or boiling water. In each case virtue lies in the medicines added to the porridge or rubbed on to the cup or stick, and into scarifications in the diviner's hands. An ordinary man who has not been treated cannot use the instruments, and porridge without '*mwafi*' is useless.

751 759 789 Certain medicines used for protection and to wreak vengeance, are also thought to be selective, and to injure only the guilty. These are horns, owned by doctors. Mwanjesi (who came of a family of doctors) told us:

> [778] My father had a water-buck horn filled with medicines and ointment, as a protection against witches. He used it, like other doctors, for burning the grass, for burning the rubbish heaps before planting millet, and for protecting a child. When the millet crops are poor, people say the witches have eaten it, and the next year the chief sends for the doctor and his protective horn. . . . He comes and makes fire and treats the tinder with ointment from his horn, and each pile of weeds is lit from that fire. . . . He sends some to the chief to fire the grass for fresh grazing. Then there is much milk, the cows that eat that grass give much milk for the witches stay away and neither eat the millet nor throttle the cows. So with a child, if a man has lost many children and has one left, he calls the doctor to come with his protective medicine (*ilipinga*) and treat the child with medicines from his horn as a protection against witches. My father used the same horn for all these things.

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[1] For a description of the procedure, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 113-16, 241-6.

769 swept through BuNyakyusa in the early 1930's; perhaps other
783 similar movements preceded it—we do not know. What is clear
[777] is that traditionally there was continuous public pressure to
[185] overcome hatred within the village and the kinship group; to rid
oneself of it by confession and an expression of goodwill. In pagan
[578] thought Utopia is a society without witches or sorcerers and,
though it was never achieved, everyone is convinced that formerly
these evil-doers were fewer than now, because they were restrained
by law, whereas 'witches' now go scot-free.

The interests of the Nyakyusa are personal and practical.
183 Health, fertility, and amity between kinsmen and neighbours
are what they seek. It is with rain and drought, with the rise of
773 the Lake or the striking of lightning which destroys property;
with stock, crops, and the wild animals which prey upon them
that the myths are concerned. We could trace no tales of the sun,
moon, and stars, and no rituals are directed to them. Reference is
made to volcanic disturbance in the myths of the heroes—
'the ground rumbled' when Nkekete and Kyala walked, and there
are stories of small lakes disappearing and reappearing elsewhere—
but the concern shown is surprisingly little if an eruption indeed
destroyed villages last century as Mr. Harkin's single informant
suggests (*vide supra*, p. 16).

Reality is thought to be revealed to men in dreams, by prophets
787 who 'go down thinking like the roots of a tree' to the world of the
791 shades, and by oracles. What men seek to know are the causes of
misfortune—public and private—and the identity of witches.
Occasionally, it is said, a prophet has looked into the future and
foretold drought, or flood, or the coming of Europeans—'white
things on the Lake'—against whom it would be foolish to fight,
but for the most part they are concerned with the misfortunes
[183] that exist, and urging men to pray in the groves. The contemplative
is not honoured in Nyakyusa tradition; the man of
spiritual power is a detective—a discoverer of evil-doers—or an
administrator whose usefulness adds to his authority.

183 Men are preoccupied with their relationships to other living
men—their kinsmen, neighbours, and fellow office-holders—
778 and with their dead fathers. They are not concerned with their
relationship to Kyala. The rituals celebrated by kinsmen are
directed to the shades not to any supreme God, and it is quarrelling
between kinsmen that angers the shades and makes the celebration
of certain rituals necessary. The communal rituals are

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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4. A visit to the chief's father's grave was paid in company with the chief and some of his amafumu. It was situated in a banana grove (ilagato) not very remote from the chief's hut. The grave of the present chief's father was on the ground-floor, about one hundred paces from its edge and was characterized by a small sixedged basalt block about half a metre in height and about forty centimetres in breadth. An indola-plant was also standing on the grave about one metre from the basalt block. 765 [764]

[illegible] 161 sacrifices are offered in this grove. These are performed only in cases of very serious accidents, sickness or famine which may overcome the chieftainship. In such cases a black cow is slaughtered after sunset at the edge of the grove. In the presence of the chief, [illegible] pieces of meat of the slaughtered beast, together with some bananas, are laid down at the grave. The chief adds a prayer to his ancestors at some distance from the grave, referring to the evil by which the chieftainship or some special village of it has been afflicted. He enumerates all the names of his ancestors and asks them for their help. 782

The remaining pieces of the meat and other bananas are left in the grove during the night. When the next day dawns, the amafumu return and some abanyago divide the meat and eat it together. On this occasion the chief orders the removal of all remains of ashes from the huts. The ashes are thrown down in such unclean places as where leprous persons had been buried. [766] After this has been done, the chief in conjunction with an unnyago produces a new fire for the huts by twirling, and all other fires of the village, or villages, must be kindled anew from this "need-fire". [372]

5. The reason for visiting an undagusi (diviner) who dwelled in Ilongo an older age-set village which seemed to the visitor to be a more ancient part of Katumba, was caused by the sickness of the chief's sister. In accordance with the custom of the Nyakyusa in bringing women back to their father's village if they are very sick, the 787 [164 484]

Cf. Johnst[illegible], Gazette, [illegible], p. [illegible]; Mackenzie, ilagato, burial place, p. [illegible]; [illegible], graves of the dead chiefs, p. [illegible]; Wilson, Introduction, p. [illegible], ilagato, sacred grove; Merensky, p. [illegible].

Cf. Fülleborn, p. [illegible].

Cf. a. 1, p. 5.

Cf. Johnston, p. [illegible].

I proposed to call the special form of villages found within the Nyakyusa society, which are erected on the age-set principle, „age-set villages" (African Studies, Vol. [illegible], No. [illegible], p. [illegible] June [illegible]), a terminology that fits well after G. Wilson's statements on the "Age Villages" (Introduction, p. [illegible] ff.). [556 621]

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787 sister of the chief had also been brought back to the village of her brother. I was of the opinion that she was afflicted by a serious [164 784] tropical ulcer on the ankle of the left foot. The healing of these ulcers commonly takes a very long time, and as this woman had already much suffered, and as the medicine-man consulted seemed to be unable to restore her, she was brought to her brother's village, but there also she had not yet recovered. The chief had, therefore, resolved to ask the diviner, whose name was Mwaigwisya, for the real cause of her sickness.

After he and his *amafumu* had taken their seats on mats, the chief explained to the diviner the reason of his visit. The diviner then grasped a curved piece of wood abou. 20 cms. in length with his right hand, after he had spat upon his hands. Then he moved the wood round his head, and finally placed it with one of its ends on the even, cleansed ground before his mat, and waited for the questions of the chief. The single questions, as for instance: "Is the sickness caused by Kyara?", or "Is the sickness caused by this or that person?", etc., were put to the diviner by Lamek Mwaipyekule, the son of a chief of another chieftainship[30], now belonging to the *amafumu* of Mwamasika, as he now stayed in his village. Mwaipyekule seemed to be not only

[241 516]

The Séance with the diviner.

[776] the most intimate adviser of Mwamasika, but alltogether the most clever man I met among this people. After each of the questions addressed to him the diviner murmured the names of the chief's

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[30] A village of this name is to be found on Dr. *Kieperts* map (of 1893), southern to the Kiaya.

ancestors and of Kyara[17]. At the same time he moved his curved wood 787
to and fro on the ground and when he did so, it indicated a negative [776]
answer from the beings invoked. But when he was asked: "Is the guilt
for the sickness to be found in the husband of the chief's sister?", he
was unable to move his wood as before; he could only stamp it on the
ground, and this meant an affirmative reaction of the invoked spirits.
Now, therefore, the meeting had reached its aim.

I asked the diviner to tell me how he had acquired his faculty. He 791
explained that (besides the necessary inner disposition) the payment
of a fee for the medical preparation was necessary in order to become
a diviner[18]. This outfit consisted in a special vaccination by a learned
diviner. For this purpose the neophyte was incised by his master on [304]
different spots on the upper side of the knuckles, and in these small
incisions was rubbed a medical powder. By these means the initiate
may be inspired by the prophesying spirits. These influences are then
felt by the diviner as a power which directs the movements of his hand
in the manner described.

6. Near the hut of the chief's principal wife was a "sacred" banana 824
plant, in the grove opposite to the chief's hut and in the grove with 778
the grave of the chief's father already described. At particular times, 782
when any need demands it, the chief offers a prayer in this place to
his ancestors[19]. The sickness of his sister, for instance, was such an 769
occasion for him to address the ancestors. I was invited by the chief
to witness this act; but I raised objections, telling him that my presence
might perhaps rather cause the anger than the help of his ancestors. [23]
In reality, I did not want the chief to stage a theatrical act on my
behalf. But the chief rejected my excuses and explained that he would
act in the same manner as if I were not present, because he had made
up his mind to this prayer. The chief was assisted during this ceremony
by Mwainyekule who presented to the chief a calabash of water as he
arrived at the banana plant devoted to this purpose. The chief took
some mouthfuls of the water and squirted it towards the banana plant.
Then he recited the names of his ancestors and begged them to help
his sister.

7. During one afternoon, I was told that a ceremony to end the 831
initiation of a (betrothed) girl was going on in a family of the village.

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[17] name of the supreme spiritual being.

[18] Cf. Mackenzie, p. 226.

[19] Mackenzie refers that such a place is named "Ikiyinja", "the family place oft prayer" (pp. 144, 197), but without indication of the locality, as Karonga.